

THE  
HISTORICAL  
COLLECTIONS

OF THE  
HISTORICAL  
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SOUTH NATICK, MASS.

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SOUTH NATICK, MASS.

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## THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN NATICK

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There have been five incorporations of either church or parish of this first Unitarian Society in Natick, as follows:

It was first incorporated March 1, 1828, under the name of the "South Parish in Natick."

Second, The Church also was incorporated March 11, 1830, under the name of the "South Congregational Church in Natick."

11 Under the name of the "Proprietors of the Eliot Meeting  
22 House in Natick," the incorporation was dated February 29  
23 1844.

The Parish was again incorporated on May 9, 1870, under the name of the "First Unitarian Parish in Natick."

The last incorporation bore the date of Dec. 3, 1908, and was incorporated under the name of "The First Unitarian Church in Natick."

The present Unitarian church in South Natick is a lineal descendant of the church formed here by John Eliot in 1651.

Other churches in town whose religious views differ from this, claim to have their origin from the same source and date their beginning from the early labors of Eliot.

This is not remarkable. He was one of the most devoted preachers the world has ever seen and very liberal in his views. Puritan that he was, Eliot's love for mankind was so deep, his liberality of spirit and breadth of character were so great that he was ready to lay aside all sectarian spirit and work even with the Jesuits for the redemption of mankind.

But no other church in Natick is so closely connected with this eminent apostle as the one where the Unitarians still hold





their services. This was the site of the original church and this spot is consecrated ground. The soil is hallowed by the footsteps of John Eliot and his devoted followers. Here on this very location the Indians came, as children to a father, to learn not only religious truths but even to read and write. Many of them were educated and trained by Eliot to such a degree that they went about to neighboring towns to spread the gospel of Christ.

The present church is the fifth one on or near the spot where Eliot preached. The first one, built in 1651 was a rather small house of two stories and was used on week days for a school, mostly for the Indians. Daniel Takawambpait was probably educated there, as were other Indians sent out as missionaries. This was the first structure erected in Natick for the worship of God and the service of man.

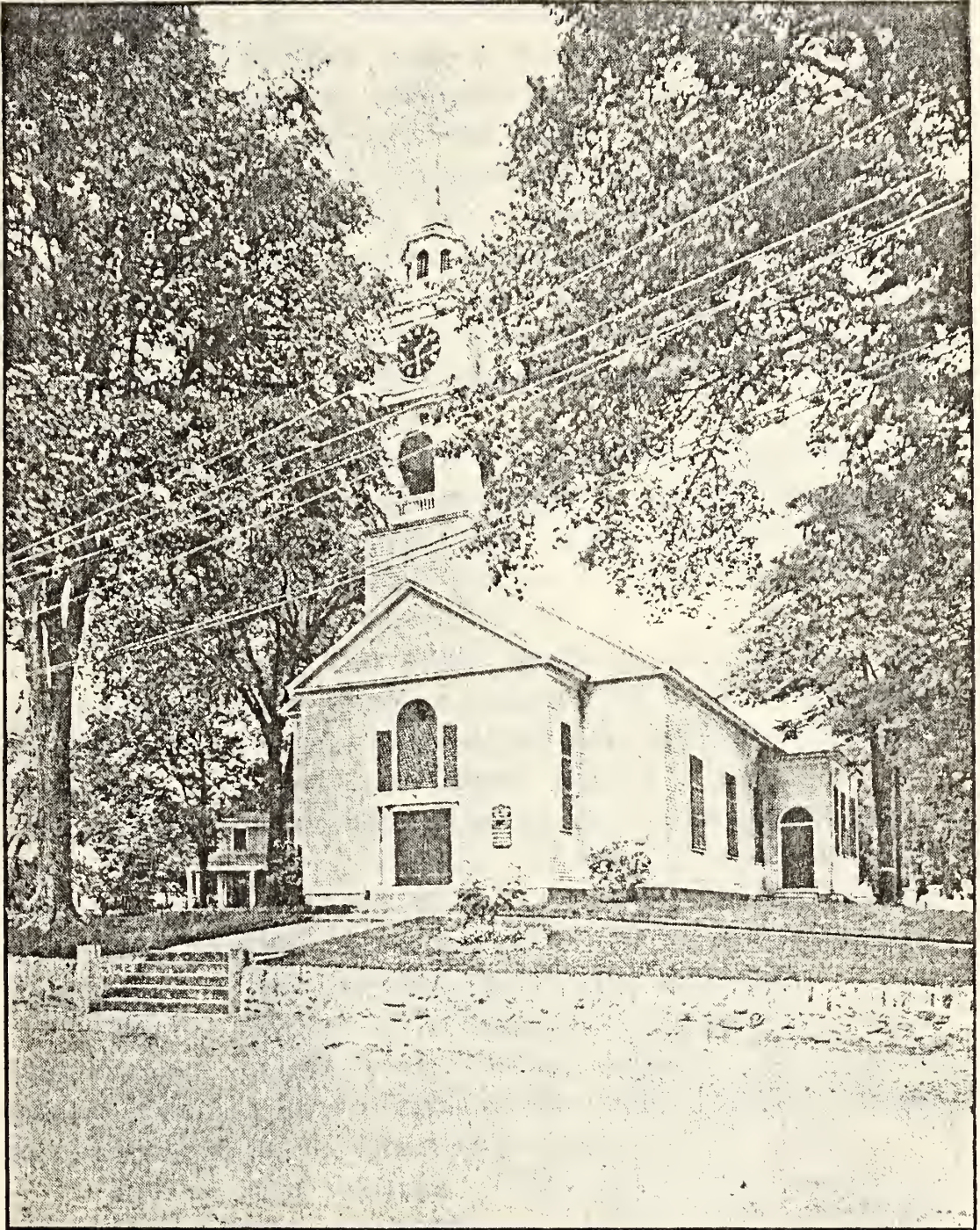
This meeting house having become unfit for use, a second was built about 1702; a third in 1721; a fourth was commenced which was not finished till 1767. In about forty years this fourth church building had fallen into disuse. In May, 1812, some young men "in an election frolic" according to Bacon's History of Natick—completely demolished it. This fourth church was built principally by the Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians.

A new church having been formed in the north part of the town in 1799, many of the former members of this church connected themselves with it. Some also went to West Needham, and others to Dover and Sherborn, so that but few were left. The people remaining became dissatisfied and a party of men met, Feb. 11, 1828, at the tavern, then kept by Job Brooks, and discussed the project of a new meeting-house. At this meeting committees were appointed; and the money for erecting a building and purchasing a bell was obtained by village subscription. The dedication of the meeting-house took place Nov. 20, 1828.

The Parish was incorporated March 1, 1828, under the name of "The South Parish in Natick." The petition was signed by Isaac Bigelow, Elijah Perry and twenty-eight others, one of them being a woman, Hannah Draper of Pegan Hill.







THE ELIOT CHURCH





The act of incorporation was approved by Levi Lincoln, Governor, and Edward D. Bangs, Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Several individuals, desiring to form a church, were invited to meet at the house of John Atkins, March 11, 1830. Rev. Ralph Sanger of Dover presided. After a prayer, Mr. Sanger read a Declaration and Covenant, which were signed by six men and assented to by nine women. Then after a sermon at the church, it was publicly announced that a church had been formed according to congregational usage.

In 1843 some difficulty arose between the original subscribers to the building fund, and it was decided to petition for a second incorporation, and under date of Feb. 29, 1844 we find upon the state records the following, "An act to incorporate the Proprietors of the Eliot meeting-house in Natick" and the property was described as "the meeting-house erected near the South burying-ground in Natick."

But the trouble seems not to have ended at that time, for on March 3, 1848, it was voted to choose a committee to confer with the new corporation that claims to own the meeting-house. This committee reported that they could find no one who was authorized to make any proposition.

In 1850 it was determined, by the proprietors, that the meeting-house should be sold at auction; and a committee from the parish was appointed to attend the sale, and then and there, in the name of the church, to protest against it and forbid all persons interfering with said house in any way or manner whatever. They, the parish, claimed to be the only legal owners of said house it having been built by subscription for said society for religious purposes, and it had been and was still so used. This appears to have settled the difficulty at that time.

The first mention of an organ in the church is in 1854. Miss Elizabeth Kingsbury was the first organist. Previous to this the choir had been assisted by the violin, the bass viol or the clarinet played by volunteer performers in the society.

Feb. 19, 1870 the name of the parish was changed, by act of the Legislature to the "First Unitarian Parish in Natick."

In 1870 the parish received its first bequest, Miss Martha Sawin leaving to it the sum of five hundred dollars.



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The first marriage in this church was that of Mr. Adams McCullough and Miss Ella Massuere. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Mr. Alger, May 28, 1872.

On April 4, 1872, the parish voted to erect a tower upon the church and place a clock in it; but the villagers coming forward generously, the money was raised by popular subscription, and a clock, with four dials, was put in position.

In 1874 a set of by-laws relating mostly to membership was presented and accepted. For a long time these by-laws (unpublished) were lost sight of, but a copy of them has recently been discovered among the private papers of Mr. Alger.

Nov. 28, 1878 the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the church was observed. At this celebration historical addresses were made by Rev. Mr. Sheafe and Rev. Horatio Alger. Original hymns were sung, written by Josiah Bigelow, Horatio Alger, Jr., and Rev. Samuel D. Robbins.

In 1879, a second bequest was received, from the estate of Oliver Bacon who left, by will, the sum of five thousand dollars to the church.

March 1, 1883 it was voted that women be admitted as members of the parish. The first persons to take advantage of this decision were Annie R. Wisner, Fannie T. Rankin, Melissa R. Perry, Olive A. Cheney and Anna M. Walcott.

In Sept. 1885 a simpler form of covenant was adopted and is still in use, as follows, "In the love of the truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man."

On the fifth day of July, 1901 a model of the apostle, John Eliot and his praying Indians, made by John Rogers, was presented by Dr. Ellsworth Eliot of New York to this church. It has been temporarily placed with the Historical Society for the convenience of the public.

In 1903 a tablet showing the genealogy and services of the Perry family to their country was given by Mrs. Elizabeth P. Kendall, daughter of Mr. Amos Perry at the request of her father who had been formerly a member of this church.





For the first fifty years after the establishment of the church the families of Bigelow, Broad, Bacon, Morse, Perry and Sawin were the most prominent figures in its history.

In 1903 tablets were placed on the wall, near the pulpit, giving the names of the founders and the ministers who had preached here. The following is the complete list of ministers:

MINISTERS

James W. Thompson,  
1830-1832

Edward Palmer,  
1833-1834

Ira H. T. Blanchard,  
1835-1840

Thomas B. Gannett,  
1843-1850

James Thurston,  
1850-1852

Nathaniel O. Chaffee  
1852-1853

Edward Stone,  
1853-1855

William G. Babcock,  
1857-1860

Horatio Alger,  
1860-1874

Joseph P. Sheafe,  
1874-1885

George H. Badger,  
1886-1892

Leverett R. Daniels,  
1893-1903

John F. Meyer,  
1903-

Who is the present minister of this church.

At a meeting of the parish held April 22, 1904 a vote was taken to have drawn up a set of resolutions in memory of Alex-



ander Hamilton Morse who had been church clerk, collector and treasurer for more than thirty years. These resolutions expressed the appreciation of the virtues, the sterling qualities, the honesty, fidelity and devotion to the church and its interests which Mr. Morse had shown during his many years of service in the offices which he had held in the church.

About 1904 investigation showed that no by-laws for the government of the church could be found. For this, and some other reasons, it was thought advisable that the church should be incorporated as a church. In accordance with this decision Rev. J. F. Meyer and the parish committee, prepared a new set of by-laws and the church was incorporated December 3, 1908, through the services of Mr. Francis Welles Hunnewell who acted as attorney for the Society. The name of the Society under this last incorporation is "The First Unitarian Church in Natick."

In the winter of 1904-1905 the members of the Hunnewell family united in placing the church edifice in perfect repair at their own expense. A rising vote of thanks was given them by all the members of the parish in recognition of their appreciation of this munificent gift.

This church stands on an elevation commanding a view of the village and the river. A smooth lawn surrounds the house which is reached by a flight of stone steps on each of three sides. Beautiful trees shade the grounds. The structure is plain and dignified, with a noble front, and an extension on the northern corner. The color has always been white.

At the lower corner just outside the retaining wall stands the giant Eliot Oak, said by forestry experts, to be four hundred years old, and across the square rises the eloquent shaft erected to the memory of the first Apostle to the Indians and the founder of the first Indian church and school in America and in the world.

[Written by Mary R. Esty, under the authority of the Executive Committee of the Unitarian church, South Natick, and subject to the supervision of the Editor of "Historical Collections."]



## THE ORIGINAL FORTY-NINERS

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When the news of the gold finding in California in 1848 spread over the country, the excitement struck Natick, and, as in every other city and town, the old men saw visions and the young men dreamed dreams of great and sudden wealth. Many had what was known as the gold fever, and the song,

"I came from Natick city with my washbowl on my knee,  
I'm going to San Francisco, the gold dust for to see,"

was sung and whistled in every direction. Several from the little shoe town made their way as soon as possible to the gold regions, all going round the Horn. Among them was Willard C. Childs, then a young man of twenty-three. With George Washington Pierce and Charles A. Davis, he shipped on the sailing vessel "Reindeer."

Think of having to get a passport to go to California! But California, although just ceded to the United States, was still in bitter contention, and to possess a passport was considered a safe and necessary thing. This passport, signed by Governor George N. Briggs and William Tufts, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, has been sacredly preserved by Mr. Childs; also the receipt for two hundred dollars, passage money, for a second cabin berth. The vessel sailed November twenty-first, 1849, with one woman and two hundred men as passengers. Two weeks out the vessel was struck by lightning, but no person was injured. The food on the vessel seems not to have been very good, considering the price paid. They appear to have carried a boat, tents, hammocks, powder and many other things with them. The passage was made in one hundred and thirty days







and was considered a quick one. They made San Francisco on the first of April, 1850.

Here they found laborers receiving from four to eight dollars per day, and machinists from eight to sixteen dollars. Board was from eight to sixteen dollars per week. Potatoes and flour were fifteen cents per pound, pork twenty-five and other things accordingly. They made themselves a gold washer, such as were sold for two hundred and sixty dollars apiece, painted their boat, obtained more provisions and proceeded to Stockton. Then they sought the mines. After locating, they built themselves a cabin for winter weather, and wandered about from mine to mine in search of better diggings; but no great fortune came to any of the Natick men. Occasionally there was a meeting with others who went out earlier. Drinking and gambling were almost universal, while theft and murder were not uncommon.

Mr. Childs did not find the life at the mines to his taste, and one year satisfied him. On returning to San Francisco, he made the prediction that that city would become the proudest in the world. From that port he shipped for home and reached Natick safely, having been gone about two years.

The names of other men from here referred to in the diary of Mr. Childs, from which these facts are taken, are Thomas H. Brigham, Simon Mulligan, Calvin H. Perry, Ambrose Sloper, John Beatty, William McCulloch, William Knowlton, Alonzo Gould, R. Jenness, George Stone, Samuel Whiting, J. Whiting, W. Whiting, Ephraim Hayes, Marcus Q. Jackson, George Travis, Horace Dewing, — Raymond — Harrington — Pray — Moody — Varney and David Clough, twenty-four in all. Of these, all came back but Clough. He married and spent his life in California, dying about 1890.

When the society of forty-niners was formed, Mr. Childs, Mr. Mulligan and perhaps some others joined it, but Mr. Childs is the only one who went from Natick living today. At this writing, 1909, at the age of eighty-three, he is active in body and mind, and still in business.

MARY R. ESTY.



# THE FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS

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## OF THE HISTORICAL, NATURAL HISTORY AND LIBRARY SOCIETY OF SOUTH NATICK

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South Natick is famous in history as the place where Rev. John Eliot, the "Apostle to the Indians," founded his first town of "praying Indians;" the place where he did much of the work of translating the Bible into the Indian language; and the place where that Bible was first used. It is also worthy of note because it contains the only monument erected to honor his memory.

With such an origin and such a record, it is natural to expect that among its people there should exist a strong desire that some means be adopted for the collection and preservation of whatever material there was obtainable, that could be of use in recording or illustrating the history of the village and its vicinity, including not only all of the present town of Natick, but those portions of Sherborn, Dover and Needham which were formerly within its limits.

No doubt there was such a desire; but during the long interval from 1651 to 1869, only individual effort was made in this direction, except that in 1851, as the bi-centennial of Eliot's coming drew near, some of the more active citizens, feeling that it would be discreditable to allow that day to pass without some recognition, succeeded in arranging a public demonstration, including an address, a dinner, and speeches, with music, which program was carried out.

This meteoric outburst of patriotism seemed to exhaust the sentiment. It made a little history, but did very little toward preserving history.





The results of the individual effort already mentioned were a few historical discourses delivered by resident ministers and afterwards published; next, a pamphlet history of the town, by William Biglow, published in 1830; and last, a more pretentious history of the town, by Oliver N. Bacon, published in 1856, Messrs. Biglow and Bacon being natives of the town.

In 1869, there became manifest a desire for organization for work in this field, those most in earnest making it their leading subject of thought and conversation. But their number was small, and that was a great obstacle in the way.

Finally it was suggested that, as there were many in the neighborhood strongly interested in natural history, it might be practicable, by combining the forces of history and natural history, to form a society with a membership large enough to sustain it.

This idea was adopted; and arrangements for a preliminary meeting being made it was held January 26, 1870, at the house of Rev. Horatio Alger, with whom there were present Messrs. Oliver Bacon, Elijah Perry, Josiah F. Leach, Austin Bacon, Wm. Edwards, Joseph Dowe and Amos P. Cheney.

Two other meetings were held, February 15, and February 22, in which Henry S. Edwards, Elijah Edwards, Rev. G. D. Abbot, LL.D.; M. V. B. Bartlett, John B. Fairbanks and Dr. Geo. C. Lincoln took part. Others had also signified their intention to join.

At the last meeting there were adopted, a name, a constitution and by-laws, and the organization was completed by electing the following list of officers of "The Historical and Natural History Society of South Natick and vicinity": President, Rev. Horatio Alger; Vice-President, Rev. Gorham D. Abbot, LL.D.; Recording Secretary, Joseph Dowe; Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Stephen C. Strong; Treasurer, Wm. Edwards. These five, *ex officio*, with Dr. G. J. Townsend, Dr. G. C. Lincoln, Elijah Perry, Esq., C. B. Dana and A. L. Babcock, constituted the first board of Directors. Historical Curator, Rev. H. Alger; Natural History Curator, Wm. Edwards.

The constitution provided that quarterly meetings should



be held in January, April, July and October; that of January being the annual meeting.

At the next meeting, the April quarterly, Dr. Abbot read a paper upon "The Value of Societies like This of Ours," and urged the young people, especially, to join as active members, stating that such connection would be of incalculable benefit to them.

A paper entitled "Reminiscences of Natick" was read by Mrs. Dowe.

The proceedings at the quarterly meeting in July included an address by the president, upon the "Importance of Historical and Genealogical Research," and he recommended that the Society take up the work of preparing a complete history of the town from the first settlement, there being no reliable one extant.

A paper upon "Humming Birds" was next given by Mr. A. L. Babcock, of Sherborn.

The Curator of the Natural History department, Mr. W. Edwards, reported, showing that a good collection of specimens was already made. This collection had been placed in the chambers over his store, in Mr I. B. Clark's block, the use of which he presented to the Society. This report called forth a vote of thanks to that officer, for the efficiency and zeal with which he had conducted his work.

The directors decided to have a course of lectures in the latter part of this year, and completed the arrangements in season to have the first given September 26, when Professor Calvin E. Stowe, a native of this village, spoke upon "New England's place in history." Eight other lectures were delivered in the course, which closed December 28. The subjects treated included history, travels, natural history and philosophy, and were much enjoyed.

The first annual meeting was held January 4, 1871. The reports of the officers afforded a gratifying view of the first year's work, not only in the number and character of the meetings, the variety, amount and quality of the collections in the several departments, but also in the increase in active membership, and the number and standing of the honorary members. Of the latter many had responded, acknowledging the compliment, some





offering words of counsel and encouragement, and some contributing more or less to the collections and to the treasury.

The election of officers resulted in the retention of nearly all of the first Board, but some of them changed places.

In 1871, besides the quarterly meetings, at two of which addresses were made by members, a course of eight lectures was given, the first, by Rev. Dr. Gilbert Haven, upon "To-day and To-morrow," October 18, and the last by Dr. Geo. B. Loring, upon "American Society," delivered December 12.

At the second annual meeting, held January 3, 1872, the official reports were satisfactory; there had been a healthy growth in numerical strength, and the collections had increased to such an extent that the rooms provided by Mr. Edwards could not properly accommodate them; therefore the directors had secured from Mr. Clark another room, next to the others. This added space made possible a re-arrangement of the whole, so that all parts could be easily seen and studied.

Among the relics were the sounding-board under which the Rev. Oliver Peabody preached, the bridal robe and slippers worn by the bride of Mr. Badger, a portion of the paper-hangings which once graced a room in the old mansion of Sir Harry Frankland in the present town of Hopkinton, specimens of the pottery works of the Natick Indians, and many other articles having historical associations which rendered them precious.

In the bird collection were many specimens of native but not common varieties, also several from foreign countries. So also, the insects represented distant lands as well as America.

The library, which was almost wholly given by members and friends, included books of history, relating in part to this locality, also some works upon several branches of natural history.

The officers elected at this meeting were, with two or three exceptions, the same as of the preceding year.

In the belief that by the incorporation of the society, some greater benefits might be secured, Rev. Horatio Alger, Hon. J. W. Bacon and Rev. G. D. Abbot, were chosen a committee to apply to the Legislature for a charter.



At this meeting also, notices were given of motions to amend the constitution and by-laws.

But fortune's smiles were not to be continuous. Early on the morning of March 2, 1872, a fire was discovered in the basement of the building in which the Society's collections were kept, and before the sun rose, the whole edifice, with all its contents was reduced to ashes. The old tavern, then called the "Eliot House," and several other buildings, including nearly all the business portion of the village, were destroyed in the same conflagration.

But the Society did not suffer a *total* loss, for, although money could not replace the lost relics, nor the record book of donations to the library and museum, which were burned, a policy for \$500 had been secured through the wise thoughtfulness of the secretary, Elijah Perry, Esq.; and with this money in hand the work of gathering a new collection was begun.

The name of the postoffice and village having been changed to "Eliot," the name of the Society was, at the April quarterly meeting, changed correspondingly.

The committee on procuring a charter of incorporation, reported at this meeting "that a general law had been enacted under which corporations could be formed without special legislation."

The vice-president then offered the following: "Moved, that a committee be appointed to prepare and report all the papers necessary to complete our organization under the statute providing for the same, and to report such accessory papers as may be convenient and desirable for the due presentation of the state and claims of our Society upon sister societies at home or abroad, and to individuals whose co-operation and aid may be valuable in our future proceedings, and to report thereon."

This motion was adopted without debate, and the mover, Rev. Gorham D. Abbot, L.L.D., was chosen that committee, but later, Wm. Edwards, Esq., was chosen an additional member.

At an adjourned meeting, held one week later, Art. III of the constitution was amended by adding a clause providing for life membership.





As the collections made since the fire of March 2 had become quite large, Messrs. William Edwards, C. B. Dana and Henry S. Edwards were, at the July quarterly meeting, chosen a committee to procure and fit up a suitable place in which to arrange them.

When the October meeting was held, Mr. A. L. Babcock of Sherborn, a member of the board of directors, gave the synopsis of a plan of a visit to British Guiana, contemplated by himself and wife, for the purpose of studying the natural history of the valley of the Demarara river and adjacent country, and procuring specimens. He proposed that the Society advance a sum of money toward the expenses of the trip, and receive therefor an equivalent in the form of specimens of natural history from the collections he would bring home with him; and his proposition was accepted.

Another course of lectures was given this season, opened October 16, by Rev John S. C. Abbot, a brother of the vice-president; and closed by H. H. Lincoln, Esq., one of the leading teachers of Boston.

This was the third course of lectures given under the auspices of the Society. As all the talent employed came from a distance, there were expenses incurred for each lecture, even if the lecturer made no charge for his services, which was the case in several instances.

One of the honorary members, H. H. Hunnewell, Esq., knowing and appreciating the matter of expense, and taking a lively interest in the work and success of the organization, very kindly presented to the directors a check covering the entire cost of each course.

The third annual meeting was held January 1, 1873, and continued by adjournment, on the seventh. The reports of the treasurer, librarian and curator showed the affairs of the Society to be in a flourishing condition.

In view of expected incorporation, some changes were made in the constitution and by-laws, after which, the election of officers and committees on the several departments of the museum, was in order.





It soon becoming apparent that all efforts thus far made to procure the incorporation of the Society had proved abortive, a fresh movement was begun toward the end of January, 1873, this time under instructions from the State commissioner of corporations.

The subscribers to the agreement of association, which was dated February 1, 1873, met, upon due notice, April 11, and again by adjournment, April 14, at which meetings a constitution and by-laws were adopted, and a board of officers elected, after which, Messrs. Jackson Bigelow, Amos P. Cheney and Thomas E. Barry, were chosen a committee to present the necessary papers to the commissioner of corporations and procure the much desired charter.

The committee attended to their duty, and in due time the certificate of incorporation of the "Historical, Natural History and Library Society of South Natick," was received, bearing date, April 26, 1873.

This corporation, although composed of members of the old Society and designed to take the place of that organization, was, in fact, a new and distinct society, with its own constitution, by-laws, officers and members.

In May two meetings were held, at which, beside other business, a resolution was adopted in relation to the transfer of the books, collections and other property of the old Society to the new corporation, and it was

*"Voted,* That any member of the 'Historical and Natural History Society of Eliot and vicinity, who shall have paid all dues to that Society up to April 1, 1873, may become a member of this Society by signing its constitution."

On the second of June following, the Historical and Natural History Society of Eliot and vicinity

*"Voted,* To transfer the cases, books, collections in natural history, together with all other property belonging to this Society, to the 'Historical, Natural History and Library Society of South Natick,' provided, said Society will assume any and all debts and liabilities which this Society may have."

The new Society held a meeting on the same date, at



which the above transfer was accepted, whereupon the old organization was, by vote, dissolved.

The first bequest left to the Society was received in the summer of this year, from the estate of Prof. John L. Russell, late of Salem.

This accession included about five thousand botanical specimens, representing the most of the orders of plants excepting ferns, but the collection of mosses, lichens and fungi were very large in proportion, and were particularly valuable acquisitions, as the donor was a specialist in cryptogamous plants, and is still esteemed as an authority upon questions in that department of botany. He gave also some six hundred shells, which formed the chief part of the Society's collection in that department until 1881. About two hundred and fifty specimens of minerals of very choice varieties were also included in the gift from Prof. Russell.

During the summer a "seal" was procured. This seal bears a design representing the apostle Eliot presenting the Bible to a group of Indians, while all stand beneath the spreading branches of the "Eliot Oak." Below the picture the word and date, "Incorporated 1873," are inscribed, and around the whole is the name, "Historical, Nat. Hist. and Lib. Soc. of So. Natick."

On November 11, a special meeting was held, at which Mr. A. L. Babcock read a paper giving a graphic account of his experiences during "Six months in South America."

The annual meeting, the next one held, took place, by adjournment, January 21, 1874.

After the reports of the officers had been rendered and accepted, thirty-one honorary members were elected, being the same persons who had held that relation to the original Society.

During the year there was greater activity than ever before. Nineteen meetings were held, of which twelve were devoted to lectures, two were public readings, one was for discussion and the others were the regular business meetings.

The library and museum received considerable accessions, among which were books from public departments at Washington, many valuable public documents from Hon. Henry Wilson,





and single volumes from other individuals, beside pamphlets and manuscripts, some of which were rare and valuable. Some choice birds were presented by Brewster & Co. of Boston, two large cases of birds were sent by H. H. Hunnewell, Esq.; and in return for the money advanced to Mr. A. L. Babcock, before he went to British Guiana, he brought a large and varied, yet choice collection, including mammals, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects, shells, botanical and mineralogical specimens, also various utensils and ornaments of the native inhabitants of that country.

In the last quarter of this year, there was received a valuable donation from Judge G. W. Clinton of Buffalo, N. Y., who sent four hundred and fifty specimens of fungi, carefully put up in little packets. This gift was acknowledged by electing the donor an honorary member, at the next meeting. Beside these, there were received beads and other ornaments, some domestic utensils and also two skulls and other bones, with some locks of hair, which are relics of the Natick Indians. They were found in the trench opened through the village for the pipes of the Natick water works. Altogether, the additions were larger this year than during any preceding one.

The year 1875 was a more quiet one than the preceding, in the annals of the Society. Beside the quarterly meetings, there was a spelling match,—held as an entertainment, April 27, to raise funds,—which was successful in all respects. During the last quarter of the year a course of seven lectures and a public reading were given.

At the close of the year it was found there were five hundred and twenty bound volumes, and more than one hundred unbound volumes and pamphlets, with some manuscripts, in the library. There were five hundred and fifteen mounted birds and a good assortment of mammals and other classes of animal forms in that department of the collections.

The next annual meeting was held, by adjournment, January 17, 1876.

The reports upon the library and museum showed that the collections had become so large as to require additional room; therefore the directors were instructed to procure better accommodations, and also to have five hundred dollars addition-



al insurance placed upon the property of the Society, making the total one thousand dollars.

Early in January, an entertainment was given, under the name of "Centennial Hob-Nob," at which a leading feature was the presence of quite a company, representing characters of Mrs. Stowe's book, *Oldtown Folks*," who amused those present by rehearsing dialogues, speeches and stories taken from that famous book, the scene of which lies mostly in this village. This entertainment brought into the Society's treasury a net profit of more than one hundred and twenty dollars.

The construction of the new Boston water works through the town brought to this place several trained engineers, who, taking a strong interest in this Society and its work, prepared papers upon a variety of scientific subjects, which they read at the meetings, thereby contributing much to make them attractive and profitable to all who attended.

Five special, beside the regular quarterly, meetings, were held during the year.

There were two hundred and ten bound volumes, and some twenty-five unbound and pamphlets, added to the library; among the latter were some rare old historical discourses and documents. The relic and natural history departments received some choice and valuable additions.

There were eight meetings of the society in the year 1877, at which eleven papers were read, two of them on local history, the others upon the arts and sciences.

On two occasions there were receptions of quite large parties of visitors, by appointment. One of these, numbering about thirty persons, came from the Normal School at Framingham, expressly to inspect the collections made by the Society, and did so with a great deal of interest. The other party included about one hundred and ten members of the Rhode Island Historical Society, from Providence, who, beside visiting the rooms of the Society, went about the village to see the old homesteads of the early days, and other historic objects, which are still in existence.

Since this visit, many contributions to library and cabinets have been received from members of the party, as well as





from the Rhode Island Historical Society. Indeed, the latter has been a constant, and not infrequent, contributor to the library ever since that time.

Eighty-one bound volumes, forty-one unbound, and twenty-pamphlets, beside files of the local papers, were added to the library during the year 1877. The growth of the other departments was in fair proportion.

The year 1878 was a comparatively quiet one, there being but five meetings of the Society. Five papers were read at these meetings.

In March, an entertainment was given on two successive evenings, and proved so popular as to return a net profit of several dollars to the treasury.

Each department of the museum had more or less accessions. Several relics were held to be valuable as memorials of the very early days of this village. One of these was a hand-made wooden mill for grinding the petals of roses, in preparing "rose conserve," a favorite sweet-meat in colonial times. This mill is believed to be two hundred years old.

The library had grown to eight hundred and seventy-four bound, and one hundred and ninety-four unbound volumes and pamphlets; also the local papers.

Among the books were a set of Vice-Pres. Henry Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America;" also six volumes of "Mass. Colonial Records," presented by Mrs Barden of Newton.

In 1879 there were five meetings, but only four papers were read before the Society.

Early in January notice was received of the death of James Watson Robbins, M. D., of Uxbridge, Mass., and that, in his will, he had directed that certain books from his library, and a portion of his collections in natural history, should be delivered to this society if acceptable.

The bequest was accepted, and on the 10th of May it was received. It included a small collection of choice minerals, about seventy volumes of valuable botanical books, a large number of pamphlets upon special topics of botany, and an herbarium comprising thousands of specimens, representing the



flora of nearly all parts of our country and some portions of foreign lands.

This botanical collection was made largely in personal visits to the places where they grew, as Dr. Robbins made a tour of New England, and resided at times in Eastern Virginia, in the vicinity of Lake Superior, and in the Gulf States. The other portion was obtained by exchanges with fellow botanists, resident in districts he could not visit, but with whom he had extensive correspondence. This acquisition raised the botanical department of the Society's museum to the rank of some much older organizations, both in amount, variety and quality.

Beside the foregoing, some donations of birds were received, not only of the species common in our own State, but also some from Florida. From Mr. Josiah F. Leach came a fine specimen of the fallow deer, from Barnstable County, Mass., where a small number still exist in the wild state, and from another friend, a life-size bust of Hon. Henry Wilson, late Vice-Pres. of the United States.

At the April quarterly meeting Mr. E. M. Marshall of Natick read a paper upon "Light and Color," with stereopticon illustrations by Mr. E. S. Hayes, also of Natick.

The following action was taken at the July quarterly meeting:

*"Resolved*, that in the opinion of this Society, the centennial of Natick's incorporation should be observed by appropriate ceremonies, and that this Society will co-operate with the town for that purpose."

This year was an eventful one in the history of the Society, but it is necessary to go back a little in order to properly state the facts.

Oliver Bacon, Esq., died April 3, 1878, at the advanced age of eighty-one years and six months. He was a native and life-long resident of this village, was one of the founders and oldest members of this Society, in the objects and success of which he had ever manifested a deep interest. By his will, after giving certain legacies to his several heirs-at-law, he gave "all the rest and residue" of his estate, both real and personal, to five persons named, but in trust. These trustees were to





erect in South Natick, upon a lot of land assigned for the purpose, a fireproof building, at a cost not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars, to be called "The Bacon Free Library." This building was to be of such design as to accommodate the proposed free public library,—for the purchase, increase, maintenance and care of which, provision was made,—and beside that the trustees were instructed to assign and fit up, in said building, suitable rooms for the use of the Historical, Natural History and Library Society of South Natick.

By this noble bequest, Mr. Bacon provided for the Society a permanent home, where its collections could be properly arranged both for preservation and examination, and not only rent free, but also without cost of money or care in its erection, or maintenance, thus enabling the Society to apply its entire income to the legitimate objects of its organization.

But the will was made seven years previous to its publication, and of the five trustees named, but two survived the testator, and one of these being in Europe, declined the trust. A year passed before a full board was organized. Then, as the building must be fireproof, it required about eighteen months' time to erect it, and it was August, 1880, before the work of fitting up the rooms could be commenced.

The collections of the Society had been arranged in nice, glazed, hard-wood cabinets, which had been procured at an expense of several hundred dollars, to meet which money was borrowed. This debt had been increased by the expenses attending the necessary preparation and care of the rapidly gathered department of natural history. When the rooms in the building were ready to be fitted up, a committee of the Society conferred with the trustees, and an appraisal of the Society's cabinets was had, the amount of which was paid into the Society's treasury. With the money thus obtained the Society was able to nearly pay off its debt, and as the remainder was furnished at a reduced rate of interest, the prospects seemed bright for the future.

The new home of the Society was ready for occupancy about the first of December, 1880, and the transfer of the collections was commenced. This work was done by the custodian



and the curator of natural history, and it kept them busy several weeks.

On the evening of April twenty-seventh, 1881, the "Bacon Free Library" building, including both the Library and those portions occupied by this Society, was thrown open for public inspection, and appropriate exercises of dedication were held in the Eliot Unitarian church.

When the April quarterly meeting took place, it was determined to have a "field meeting" on the thirtieth of that month, and Messrs. Elijah Perry, Joshua Parmenter, Rev. J. P. Sheafe, Jr., Rev. Pearse Pinch and M. V. B. Bartlett were chosen a committee of arrangements to prepare for it. An account of the proceedings on that occasion is appended to this sketch. At the October quarterly meeting, it was voted to invite the "Veteran Musical Association of Natick," to visit the museum of the society, and to hold a public "sing" in the Eliot church. It was also voted to provide a collation to be served in the vestry after the concert. The invitation was accepted and the visit was paid on the first of November, when the whole of the Bacon Free Library building was opened to the visitors, of whom seventy-six recorded their names and ages in the Society's register. The weather being favorable there was a quite large attendance of the members who all enjoyed the occasion very much. As is often the case, however, there was cause for sadness at this time for, during this meeting, resolutions of respect and condolence were adopted upon the death of Charles Bigelow, Esq., president of the association. The president of this Society, Rev. Horatio Alger, was absent, also, from the meeting, on account of the protracted sickness, from which he had suffered for nearly a year.

President Alger died November 6th, 1881, which was the seventy-fifth anniversary of his birth. He was the first president of the Society and held the office by annual re-election, until his death. His successor was Geo. J. Townsend, M.D., who had been vice-president for several years.

There were six meetings during the year 1882. Of the two special meetings, one was held February 17th, when a double entertainment was given. The first part was in the museum, where eight microscopes of large power were in position





and a variety of objects were shown in each. The second part was in Edward's Hall, Merchant's Block, when Mr. E. S. Hayes of Natick with his large magic lantern and oxy-calcium light, exhibited a large number of beautiful pictures, including some objects of natural history and amusing subjects, but mostly views of scenery in our own country and in foreign lands. The second special meeting was a May-day field meeting, the second of this kind held by the Society. A full report of the proceedings will be found in another part of this book.

A paper upon "The Indian Grants from the Common Lands in 1719," was read at the October quarterly meeting by Mr. Horace Mann of Natick, who also displayed a map of Natick, on which the location and area of the said grants were depicted.

The additions to the museum during this year were not large, but somewhat curious. A white specimen of the gannet, among the birds; a frog-fish, captured near Peak's Island, Portland harbor; and some curious butterflies from South America were among those of the natural history department. A squash presser nearly one hundred years old, a basket, made and ornamented with colors by "Old Patience Pease," some fifty to sixty years ago, and sundry stone utensils of Indian make were added to the relics. The library was increased by forty-four bound volumes and thirty-four pamphlets.

At the annual meeting held January 9th, 1883, it was decided to hold another field meeting on the first of May, and a committee of five were chosen to arrange a program and carry it out. The third field meeting was accordingly held, and although the day was windy and rough, there was a large attendance, and the exercises passed off satisfactorily, as will be seen by the account subjoined. This was the only special meeting of the Society held during the year; and at the regular stated meetings no papers were read, and only routine business transacted.

Our library contains some nine hundred bound volumes, about one hundred unbound, and nearly seven hundred pamphlets and manuscripts. Of maps and charts there are about two dozen, of various sizes, qualities and value. There are also



nearly complete files of the Natick Bulletin and the Natick Citizen, which have been donated by the publishers. Of the Boston Daily Journal we have several years' issues, nearly complete from March, 1861, through 1865, with occasional numbers of earlier and later dates. There is a file of the Norfolk County Gazette, nearly complete through four or five years, with less full additional volumes for three or four years, all of the Gazettes being presented by Hon. Samuel B. Noyes of Canton, Mass., one of our honorary members. Beside these, we have many occasional publications, and odd numbers of magazines, all of more or less historic value.

The museum comprises about sixty specimens of mammals, and between five and six hundred birds, of which fully one-half are from foreign countries. Of reptiles and batrachians we have between eighty and ninety specimens, several of very rare species. There are less than fifty specimens of fishes, of which about one-half are in alcohol. Between two and three hundred insects represent that class. The collection of shells is a choice one, numbering several hundred specimens, of which nearly one-half are named types. Some rare specimens of corals and sponges have also been secured. In the botanical department the collection, as before stated, is very large for so recently organized a society to possess; and it is specially rich in ferns, mosses and lichens. In minerals the collection illustrates several departments of geology, and includes fragments of stone from many noted places in the Old World as well as America. Of relics and curiosities there are many varieties; but nearly all illustrate the daily life or the character of the persons or the communities by whom they were used. The entire collection is one that cannot fail to interest every visitor.

The Society has had singular success as a collector; and its future usefulness can be largely augmented, not by the exhibition of its treasures merely, but by using them as illustrations of instructive lectures or talks upon the departments of study which they represent.

AMOS P. CHENEY in 1884 [Reprint.]





## HENRY WILSON'S BOYHOOD

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In the small town of Farmington, N. H., about fifteen miles north of Dover, on the sixteenth day of February, 1832, Henry Wilson was born. It was a small town which had been incorporated only fourteen years, and had a farming population, principally engaged in working a stony soil where the seasons for raising crops were always short, and the results often uncertain. In the spring, the corn around Boston would be laughing in the face of the farmer before the husbandman in Farmington had hauled his plow from its winter quarters or perhaps had made up his mind as to the particular field on which he would use it. The crops were tardy in the spring and the frosts hustled along in summer like passengers, anxious to secure a train already in sight, so hustling became the regular and imperative order for all who intended to live another season. The people were necessarily poor and had little promise of much improvement. Winthrop Colbath, the father of Henry Wilson was among the poorest and had before him the problem of bringing up a large family in conditions almost hopeless. His had been the condition of his father and father's father and hence despair was his chief inheritance. Henry therefore was launched in the world with an additional ancestor to give testimony to the impossibility of getting away from the family fate. But Henry broke the links which had bound the Colbath family fast in the clutches of poverty, and it is the mission of this sketch to show how it was done.

The life of Henry Wilson was one of struggle from the start, and he received the notice of the first person of consequence by being engaged in a fierce tussle with another boy in the roadway near his home in Farmington at the opportune moment when the first lady of the town was passing in her carriage.



She was Mrs. Eastman, wife of the village lawyer, and sister of Levi Woodbury, who later became governor of the state, senator in Congress, secretary of the treasury, and justice of the Supreme court of the United States. How wonderfully the smallest circumstance sometimes determines the character and career of the important and influential citizen ! The lady often passed down the Rochester road, and a hundred times had seen these same lads playing in the dirt, ragged and restless, but had never before encountered them engaged in a fight and this battle attracted her notice and caused her to stop and reprove them for their foolishness. The other boy has not been heard of since. It came into her head to ask if they could read, and how they got books, and something in the manner of the answer of Wilson led her to think he had material in him for the making of a man above the common. She hereupon told him to come to her house and make use of the library of her husband. This was a Godsend indeed, for he was yearning for knowledge, and needed a wise counsellor such as this woman was to help him make selections and how to use them. The son of Mr. Eastman told me in 1872 that he well remembered Wilson used to come to his father's office and read and discussed politics with the men who were in the habit of dropping in there to while away an hour in that manner, when he was about a dozen years of age. The Eastmans soon took a deep interest in him, and their advice and instruction stimulated and guided him in the pursuit of knowledge and started him on the grand career he assumed and held to from that day.

Before he was ten years of age, the poverty of his father had compelled him to bind his boy to service with a Farmington farmer to earn his bread and learn the art and mysteries of that occupation as then practiced among the hills of the Granite state, but quite imperfectly understood at that time.

The farmer, Mr. Knights, was not deficient in the art of how to get the most labor out of a boy under his complete control, and he roused his servants at break of day, and kept them moving as long as it was light enough to see the difference between weeds and corn.





When the weather grew cold, and the evenings long, and the family went to bed and to sleep, Henry crawled into the corner near the blazing light of the huge back log and studied and read until the log had ceased to burn and enable him to continue the task. This was not an occasional exercise, but daily. Farming had few joys for Henry Wilson, and he never dwelt on them with any remembrance of pleasure other than the gratification he had in study by the fire light of the otherwise desolate nights. He had absolutely no companionship, and had there been any of the household willing to partake of the warmth of the burning log, their presence would have been gladly excused for they regarded his proceedings as preposterous, and all he was learning an injury to his success in the life he was following. Book farming had small consideration in the eyes of the master he was under, and when I consulted a surviving member of the family in relation to his manner of living which I did in 1882 I was met with something like the semblance of a sneer as a hint that I might be better employed. He had no play days and no playmates. The location was too remote for the circus to be drawn within reach, and too highly populated to sustain local fairs common in many places. Could he have obtained a leisure day, it would not have been spent in idleness or in hunting and fishing and during my acquaintance with him I never saw him out with a gun and we went fishing only once and he was such a novice with hook and line that he caught no fish during the whole day. He could not sing and hence avoided the singing schools and rehearsals and parties, and not until long after he graduated from the apprenticeship of Farmer Knight did he join in the social festivities of the village where he made his home.

Provisions had been made in the indentures committing Henry to the clutches of the energetic farmer of Farmington to have him enjoy one month's schooling in each year for eleven years. It is painfully evident that the community which tolerated and made legal provision for a barbarity of that sort had little conception that they were living in the nineteenth century, and forty years of it had already passed and gone. We must re-





member however, that ten years before this in which occurred the birth of Wilson, the farmers in enlightened England were still walloping with raw cow hide not only their apprentices, but their hired hands at pleasure, and it was regarded as next to impossible to raise enough pork and turnips to keep the British aristocracy from famishing without that wholesome practice. At the same period the gibbet as an institution was in full blast, and the creaking of the rusty chains of a slain culprit made night hideous at many a cross road in the agricultural districts of the country.

At that time in history it had not been supposed possible to make a vice-president out of the material Mr. Knight was working, and he could not anticipate the result of his handling such an unpromising specimen. He accordingly construed the agreement in relation to the schooling to give to him the right to pick the days from time to time as he could best spare him from the farm, instead of letting him have consecutive days, and hence his schooling was deprived of nigh half its value as there was danger of his forgetting much he had learned in one day before the next selected day came round. He went the first day of the term and it was three weeks before he had another chance to climb the ladder of learning. Think of it, ye gods! A young man absolutely crazy for knowledge and obliged to get it in that intermittent manner! Is that a good way to fit a boy for a seat in the Senate of the United States? On that first day the teacher marked a lesson for him to commit in an abridgement of Murray's English grammar, and on his return at the end of the three weeks, put him to the recital. He took the floor and kept on repeating long after the mark had been passed, and at length the teacher, getting short of time, inquired how much more he could repeat and was amused to hear the answer that he could give the entire book and not miss a word. Very few boys in that school or any other, could have accomplished the feat in a year, giving their whole time to the task and having no long days of farm labor to perform under the eye of a hard, exacting master. If this performance has ever been excelled by any country lad, I have never heard of it, and



it is almost too wonderful for belief; but so is the whole story of the life of this extraordinary man.

Now while the attempt of Mr. Knight to curtail the limit of education provided in the indentures below a fair construction of the language used would seem to be an injury, and had all the elements of a wrong, it turned out to be a help instead. It roused indignation in the mind of the boy, and a determination not to be cheated of an education to gratify the cupidity of a hard and grinding master, and he resolved he would learn something in spite of the intention to prevent it. He did not know his powers, and it was a good time to test them, so instead of sitting down and growling at the wrong done him, he let that go and put all his energies into the effect to get the knowledge needed anyhow. And his success was so grand, it induced him to adopt the proverb, "Never say die, let what will happen," and that once firmly fixed in his mind was a principle of action which was worth more to him than can be estimated.

Thus he went on, for eleven long years, receiving, in each year, scattered along at unequal intervals, twenty-six days of instruction of the quality afforded in that part of the country at the period. But his devotion to his studies, and the reading of the books he was able to command left him no time to play when his day's labor on the farm was ended, and he practically lived without playmates and companionship, and in my long intercourse with him, I rarely ever heard him name any persons who seemed to have any strong hold upon his affections, nor could he refer me to any who were able to supply interesting anecdotes of boyish pranks and escapades committed while at school. It could not have been expected that he could have committed any, as he did not attend often enough to get on terms of intimacy with anyone, and it could hardly be said that he had schoolmates. Those who knew him at all were few, and they remembered that he always took the part of a small boy in the fights which were projected from time to time, and would not allow a helpless fellow to be thrashed in his presence.

He had a great longing for newspapers; but as this was before the days of reading-rooms and institutes, and the mail





visited Farmington only once a week, but few families took the papers. Knights not being one, he had to employ his mother to borrow the "Dover Gazette" of a neighbor after it was a week old, and a later one had come to relieve it from service, and he would run home and read it at night so as not to have it kept long from the family or others who were dependent on borrowing. Thus he toiled for knowledge, and literally acquired it on the run. Lawyer Eastman had some old newspapers carefully filed away for reference; a Washington Weekly, and Nile's Register, whose contents he eagerly devoured though they were old; and there were in his library Plutarch's Lives, a memoir of Napoleon and a biography of one Henry Wilson, whose character made such a strong impression on the mind of the youth that he fell in love with the name and resolved to appropriate it for his own which he did on attaining his majority.

When he was about fifteen he read in the Dover paper a severe criticism of Marshall's "Life of Washington." It was denounced as a bad book because it had convinced some prominent man that democratic doctrines were wrong.

The Dover Gazette was the paper he had relied upon for his supply of truth in politics, and it was a shock to him to learn that John Marshall was able to convince any one that democracy was an error. Such a book should be seen. There must be things of importance in it with which he was not acquainted. No doubt they were lies but still worth looking into. He must have that book; how to get it was the question. There was not a copy in Farmington, and the first penny of the many dollars needed to buy the treasure, had not yet found its way into the poor boy's pocket. He heard after searching enquiry that some marvel of fortune in the village of Rochester, was the owner of the wonderful book, and Rochester was seven miles away; could only be reached by him on foot, and after the day's work was done. He must have the book, however, and bring it seven miles and return and repeat the journey to see it back safely in the hands of the owner, making twenty-eight miles of night travel to ascertain whether the editor of his paper was a truthful James or a miserable deceiver. True he could send by some one



for it; but the messenger might not be careful of it, if he obtained it at all, and it might be stolen from the wagon or be drenched in a shower—calamities he could not repair, and must not be risked. He must go for it and he went. It is so easy to get books now, by merely crossing the street, that it is difficult to imagine that in 1825 it required a tedious journey and a siege of sore feet, the loss of two night's sleep, and the weariness and lonesomeness, unavoidable in such a trip, in order to learn a single item of truth, but so it was. Wilson thought it would pay and always afterwards felt it did. He learned from the book the same truth the other man had as reported by the Dover paper, and was a whig from that day, bearing his sore feet with a composure which was happiness itself compared with the darkness that had enshrouded his mental vision during the years of his boyhood and which had it not been dispelled, would have kept him forever in the ruts of ignorance, cut and travelled by his progenitors. It was so manifestly important to his progress in life that he should escape from the thralldom of democracy as then held by the dominant party in his native state, that he deemed it a cause of profound thanksgiving all his later life.

He could not buy books, but he could sometime borrow by tiresome marching, and his marching paid. He seized with avidity any chance to earn some money, and to this end he became a contractor. There was to be a holiday on one occasion, and he applied to a neighbor for a job. The man had an old stump he wanted removed from his field, and offered him a cent to dig it out and haul it to the dooryard. As it was a chance to earn, he accepted, it was so exhilarating to be doing business on his own account, and not be working under the eye of a master. The contract proved heavier than he had estimated, and the whole day was consumed in removing the stump; but he put the job through nevertheless, and at the close of the day received his pay in cash, as stipulated—the first money he could call his own. It was small pay; but no matter for that; it was a beginning, and as he was on the road to greater things and must begin somewhere, he may as well begin at the beginning. A cent thus earned would not be carelessly spent. He learned in that day





more of patience and self-denial than he could have purchased with a hundred times the money, so the time was by no means lost. The lesson was of immense value to him.

It is easy to see now that the John Marshall book was worth much more to him than the labor and weariness it cost to get it. It was positively essential for him to become a whig and ship his incubus of democratic theories to the shades of oblivion if he would rise to the elevation he desired to reach. Had he remained a democrat, his associations would have continued to be with democrats, and all the time he was fitting himself for his destiny, the democratic party was fitting itself for destruction. It went down at length, and carried with it the brilliant Douglas, the superb Breckenridge, and hosts of splendid men that Wilson could not compete with. Wilson in the ranks of that party would have been as forlorn as a mouse in the jaws of a tiger. The Marshall book was his rescue. It made a whig of him, and being a whig, he formed the associations which were able to put him in the fore front of the battles he was to fight for freedom and correct principle. That he would have succeeded as a democrat is inconceivable.

Thus, when he was twenty years of age, and only one cent in his pocket, the storage room in his head was much better filled than most boys of whatever age you may select. He could name the place of every battle in the Revolution and the war of 1812, the date, number engaged on each side, and you could not ask him a question relating to those facts that he could not answer. He had studied to some purpose, and thus had a mastery over all his competitors in facts and dates which antagonists had the most profound respect for, and made them very careful how they challenged. Thus he lived, studied, worked and reflected, until his twenty-first birthday came and set him free from the galling bondage of his indentures. He now found work on the farm of Mr. Wingate, for some months at nine dollars a month, and when the time was up, he sought employment at Great Falls, Dover, Newmarket and other places in the vicinity, willing to labor for nine dollars per month and earn twice that considering his activity and muscular strength, but was unable to obtain a situation, and returned home not much





in love with the administration, whose policy had failed to create a better state of things according to the promises of the Dover Gazette which he had persistently read and noted. Thus he was able to inject some telling items of personal experience into his debates with his democratic adversaries which they found were ugly customers at election time, when the workmen all turned out to hear him speak.

For his eleven years' service with Mr. Knight he received one yoke of oxen, six sheep and such information about farming as Knight possessed, which however valuable, proves insufficient to tempt him to put into a book of instruction for the benefit of the race. His service with Mr. Wingate yielded forty-five dollars, so at twenty-one and a half years of age, he started in the great world with a capital in cash of less than one hundred and fifty dollars, but he had read seven hundred books, and probably more than ten times the number of newspapers than any man in town at that date. He had a remarkable memory for facts and dates, and in reading made a point not only to fix the principal incidents in his mind, but also the precise time of their occurrence. This practice vastly improved his memory, and afterwards the great stores of facts treasured in his head with no very definite purpose other than to possess knowledge, not knowing exactly when or where it might be used, became immensely valuable to him, and made him a competitor in debate, that shallow and pretentious men have not been swift to encounter in the Senate or elsewhere. So his worldly capital was not to be despised after all. He had created a confidence in his own powers that encouraged him to push ahead in the same line he had started on and his determination to be somebody had not abated in the least degree.

JONATHAN BACON MANN in 1904.



## WEST CENTRAL STREET

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### ITS TREES AND RESIDENCES

One of the first things to attract the eye and excite the admiration of a stranger coming into town is the double row of stately trees which fling their arms across West Central Street, forming a green roof in summer and a brown arch in winter.

This is not one of the oldest roads in town, Pond and Mill Streets having been formerly the travelled path, but seventy-five or more years ago this way to Framingham was opened and men began to build upon the eastern end of it. These trees were set out between 1830 and 1845. The men who planted them are entitled to the remembrance and gratitude of those who enjoy them today. It was done by those who owned homes and wished to make them attractive.

On the south side the residents were, first, Rev. Martin Moore who lived in the parish house, where Middlesex Block now stands. Then Calvin H. Perry, Charles Hayes who built the Chas. Q. Tirrell house, John B. Walcott, Alvin Fuller, Sumner Horton, Seth Walker, Henry Wilson, David and Jonathan Colburn, Lucius Munroe, whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Henry Wilson, Hanson Walker and John Felch.

On the north side Jonathan Walcott, Rev. Martin Moore, who built the well remembered Adams house on the site of which Unity church now stands. Richard and Sharrington Hayes built side by side. Richard Hayes' house was of brick. A few years later, it was burned and the present house was built. Nathan Rice and the Rev. Alfred Greenwood built twin cottages, and between them where, now is Spring Street, ran a wide ditch which emptied into Pegan brook. Both these cottages had tall gothic windows which have long since been changed for a more modern fashion. A sister of Mrs. Rice, Miss Nancy Livermore,





had her home with her sister and kept a private school. Next, Stephen Hayes who afterwards built on East Central Street, and whose wife, Maria Hayes and their son, Edgar, gave to the town their fortune for an old people's home. Freeman S. Whitney came next, then his two brothers, David M. and George C. Whitney, Ephraim Hayes, Curtis Parker and Peleg LaGro. Some years later Charles Haseltine built the cottage, now the home of Alonzo Drake. This was the last house on the street until about 1857 when Edward Walcott built the Taylor mansion. Since then many changes have been made and some houses built in. My father, Freeman S. Whitney, disliking elm trees, planted four ash trees which I, then a small child, held in position, while he filled the soil about their roots. Nearly all the trees lived. but a few, dying, they were replaced by maples. Above Forest Street the trees were all planted by Edward Walcott, who also set the beautiful row between Forest and Cemetery Streets. Formerly three or four very tall elm trees stood in a small triangle at the junction of Elm and Central Streets.

LUCIE M. WHITNEY CHILD.

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## CORNWALLIS IN NATICK, 1833

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Before the war of secession, the people of New England had no way, so attractive for the display of energetic and boisterous patriotism as a celebration of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, which event took place on the 19th of October 1781, and ended the contest of Great Britain for supremacy in America. It was a happy event for our country, and consequently the anniversary, in time, came to be regarded as funny; and the fun, as is usual with fun in general that has any stated recurrence, assumed the grotesque form, and lapsed into burlesque.

We speak of a great defeat ever since 1815 as a Waterloo, and a Cornwallis is a small Waterloo with the element of fun



at the fore. The first Cornwallis in Natick of which I have knowledge took place in 1833. At that time there were just four houses between Pegan Brook and the Asa Felch house at the corner where the old Framingham road crosses the road to Cochituate. There were not more than four houses on West Central street, and Summer and Cochituate and Walnut streets had not yet been imagined. All the land from the site of the present Post Office north to the road by the Deacon Fiske place was owned by Dr. Angier, and most of it was pasture. Walnut street was the eastern line of Dr. Angier's farm. North of Pegan Brook there was an abrupt rise of the ground forming quite a bluff whose crest was reached about where the ball factory now stands, and with great military acumen this spot was selected as the camping ground of the British army and the scene of Lord Charles Mann Cornwallis' humiliation. That spot was Yorktown, but better known, now, as a place for base balls rather than cannon balls. Which are the more destructive missiles is a question undecided at present, but many a poor fellow has met his Waterloo by standing in front of a regulation ball, manufactured at the Yorktown of Natick. North of the crest the ground gently sloped off to within a few rods of Angier's barn at a point where there was a little water shed or run part of the year, commanded by the British position on this occasion, and east of this run there commenced a swamp, always wet, which ran southerly to Uncle Ruel's pond now the line of the Albany railroad at the hat factory. At the foot of the bluff on the west, the Wayland road passed in considerable of a circuit, and so near the British encampment as to be unsafe for travel, but affording a fine chance for Washington to throw a storming party upon the defences. I am particular in describing the situation in order that the present inhabitants of the place may be able to picture the scene as it lay, in October, 1833, when no Natick man had set eyes on a locomotive, and the whistle of a steam engine of any description had not been heard within our limits. Very primitive it was, you may believe.

On this occasion Washington was personated by Major Dexter Drury, and Cornwallis by Captain Sylvius Holbrook,





both of West Natick; and their military achievements touched high water mark on that day for the first and last time, it being the only time when either held supreme command of an entire army. The old warriors were well represented, it was thought, for Major Drury was tall, erect and fond of military adventure to the full extent afforded in a time of profound peace, and Capt. Holbrook was portly as any traditional English lord who dines every day on the best of roast mutton and beef washed down with brown stout and Madeira or old port. It was inspiring to see them dressed in the uniform of the countries they respectively represented. It was fifty-two years from the date of the surrender of Cornwallis, and next October it will be just fifty-two years from the date of the representation I am describing. How odd it seems. The real surrender looked to me, at that time, as a very far off event, but today the sham capitulation is like yesterday, almost—and not like yesterday, for I am painfully conscious that very few who joined in the parade of 1833 are now living to read these lines.

Col. Alexander Coolidge was captain of a regiment of Continentals, and Joseph Bigelow raised a company of Indians to act as allies of the red coats. This latter body I joined. We met at Dr. Angier's barn, and found the right wing of the British army. While we were putting on our blankets, moccasins and war paint, which was made of the juice of the poke berry, we were re-enforced by about a dozen real Indians from the reservation at South Natick under the lead of Joe Pease, but when our costume was fairly donned, and the long black hair cut from many horses' tails was adjusted to our heads the difference between the real and counterfeit Lo! was not by any means so marked as one might suppose. And the transformation was not altogether in costume, for the spirit of vagrancy sat on us as well as the garments, and the inclination to whoop and yell was spontaneous and general, and the demand for fire-water was real and far from parsimonious. Our grand sachem, the grave, reticent and stern Joseph Bigelow, jumped over the ground with spasmodic energy as though suffering an attack of St. Vitus' dance, and his war-whoop came out with the clearness of a night-owl's scream. Poor old Joe





Pease looked upon the gathering with deep emotion, and while great tears were rolling down his swarthy cheeks, harangued the company with earnest and pathetic eloquence. Joe and his comrades were the last of the Naticks, and I suppose he may have imagined that, at length, a pentecostal day had come, and the English who had staked off and fenced in the Indian hunting grounds were now repentant, and were about to join the tribe and restore the old nomad life with all the excitement of the chase, and the glories and triumphs of the tomahawk and scalping knife. I could not understand a word of the oration, but the earnestness and emotion of the old Indian were magnetic and impressive.

When all were ready a stealthy movement was made for the woods. The woods were on the farm of Rev. Martin Moore and extended westerly from North Main street to land of Capt. George Whitney, their line extending along the present line of Cochituate street, I suppose, or what used to be Cochituate street. It was designed to have our part of the fighting done in these woods, but when Lord Cornwallis sent out his advance to meet the assault of the Yankees as they came rushing up the ravine of the south fork of Pegan brook at its confluence with the main stream, there was such a paucity of muskets as to render the dramatic effect of small account, and in order to swell the noise into a volume of passing respectability, Sachem Bigelow moved the Indians into the open field, and, contrary to all tradition, they fought without any shelter from bushes and trees, and did their part with all the valor of regulars. There was immense excitement in this sham fight. The rushing of the antagonists at each other, the flash of the guns, the smoke, the smell of burning powder, the noise of rattling musketry, and the presence of a foe firing into our very faces annihilated the burlesque and made it all seem real. It could hardly have seemed more so had I been surrounded by the dead and wounded. It was, of course, arranged that the British and Indians should fall back under the weight of the American and French columns, and we did so, but not by any order to retreat, as far as I know, but because it was so admirably planned that



we were made to feel the presence of the enemy, and yielded under the necessity, though no one was hurt. Nothing ever seemed more real as we met the enemy, face to face, and fired, our muzzles and theirs almost touching, and then fell back after a stubborn resistance and full determination not to, come what might. But we were driven into the fort—the fort, made of sticks, old rails and rye straw was set on fire making a grand conflagration, and at last we were captured.

The closing scene, Lord Cornwallis giving up his sword and the men laying down their arms was worthy the general demonstration and Maj. Drury probably slept that night with serene consciousness that a duty had been admirably performed. It is with a sad interest that I write or rather re-write the incidents of this Cornwallis because of the diminished number of people who will be interested in the recital. Yet it was a great day, and wonderfully interesting to actors and spectators—and the talk of weeks while preparations were going on, and the talk of weeks when the drama had been performed. A sham, it is true, yet a part of the life of the period when it was enacted, and a remembrance which lingers fondly in the recesses of a mind which shortly will lose the power to portray.

JONATHAN BACON MANN, in 1885.

Feb. 27, 1885.

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## NATICK PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR ORIGIN

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In 1804 there was an attempt made to establish a town library in Natick. The records of the town show that, at a meeting held April 2, 1804, there was an article in the warrant which read as follows: "To see if the town will purchase a library." This was premature, and it was not until nearly half a century afterwards, that the town had authority to grant money for any such purpose. By chap. 305 of the acts of 1851, cities and towns in this commonwealth were first authorized "to raise





money for the purpose of establishing public libraries, and to receive, hold and manage any devise or donation for the establishment, increase and maintenance of such libraries." We have no record of the discussion or debate which ensued upon the article to which we have referred, and all we know of the matter is that the plan of establishing a library then, failed, perhaps from the lack of proper legislation; but the interesting fact remains that there were, then, enlightened people in Natick, who foresaw the wisdom, if not the necessity of such an institution.

March 25, 1808, under a general law passed in 1806, authorizing the organization of proprietors of social libraries, Samuel Morse and others, petitioned William Goodnow, Esq., a Justice of the Peace, to call a meeting of the proprietors of a library entitled the Natick circulating library. The original petition, and the warrant issuing thereon, calling a meeting of the proprietors, are now among the files of papers, in possession of the town clerk, and it is a fact, worth remembering, that the Samuel Morse whose name was first appended to this petition and to whom the warrant was directed, was the grandfather of Mary Ann Morse, the founder of the Morse Institute. A catalogue of the library thus organized, printed without date, but about 1814, is still in existence, containing the names of fifty-two proprietors, all of whom are now deceased, except Edward Hammond, Jr., who still survives at a very advanced age. This catalogue embraced ninety-four volumes; and the writer and many of his youthful associates were under great obligations to the valuable instructive and amusing volumes, embraced in this library. It was all the more interesting and valuable to the youth who took books from it, after it became disused by the original proprietors on account of the small number of books acceptable to them.

In 1847 this library had become scattered, and could no longer meet the wants of the increasing population of the town. The Citizens' library was then organized, and the shareholders purchased a collection of well-selected books, which afterwards became the nucleus of the town library, and still later of the Morse Institute. The late Hon. Henry Wilson took a deep interest in the Citizens' library, and was one of its original proprietors. Its catalogue, published in 1852, contains a list of 432



volumes, most of which are still on the shelves of the Morse Institute.

But there was an increasing desire for books among all the people of the town which could not be satisfied by a private collection, and in order to meet this reasonable feeling, the proprietors of the Citizens' library, on the 10th day of February 1857, voted to give it to the town, "as a foundation of a town library, provided the town will appropriate three hundred dollars to be expended the first year, in enlarging the library, and one hundred dollars at least, annually, for the same purpose, and provide a room for the library, and appoint and pay a librarian.

This was accepted by the town April 6, 1857. and thereupon the Citizens' library became merged in a town library. The town made annual grants for its support, generally in excess of the amount it was required to make by the terms of its contract.

A catalogue, published in 1859, shows that it had then increased to 1742 volumes, of which only 483 belonged to the Citizens' library. Another catalogue was published in 1866, and annual supplements of volumes added thereafter. These show a constant increase of interest by the inhabitants, in their library, and when it was transferred by the town committee to the Morse Institute, June 2, 1873, there were in it 3154 volumes of well selected books.

The Morse Institute was founded by Mary Ann Morse who died June 30, 1862, leaving her whole estate, by will, for the purpose of establishing a library for the use and benefit of all the inhabitants of the town. Under these circumstances, the town wisely transferred, by vote passed March 3, 1873, its library to the care and management of the trustees, elected by the town, under the provisions of the will of Miss Morse, thus forming the basis of the library of the Morse Institute.

The value of this bequest was, after the death of Miss Morse, made a matter of debate; but, by a careful and judicious administration of the funds placed by the will at their disposal, the trustees have been able to build an elegant library building, upon an ample lot, reserved for that purpose by the will, costing, beside the lot, twenty-seven thousand five hundred dollars; and





have purchased from the funds in their hands, 5962 volumes that have been added to the Town library. The trustees have, besides, a fund of about twelve thousand five hundred dollars, reserved for the purchase of books, only the interest of which has been, thus far, applied to that purpose.

There have been added to the library from other sources, about 2900 volumes, largely public documents, the gift, for the most part, of the Hon. Henry Wilson, who, while he lived ever manifested a lively interest in the welfare and prosperity of a library to which the youth of Natick might resort while endeavoring to imitate his example as a self-made and self-educated man.

The library building was completed, and the Town library, with a large addition of valuable books purchased with the funds of the trustees, placed upon the shelves, on the 25th day of December, 1873, and on that day the new library building was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, and on January 1, 1874, was first opened for use. It has been constantly and increasingly patronized by all classes of the people of the town, until it has become almost a necessity to very large numbers. A full and complete catalogue has been greatly needed for several years, so that those who borrow books from it might know what it contains. The trustees attempted to supply this want in an imperfect manner by a catalogue published in 1875, containing only an alphabetical list of authors with the titles of their several works. This answers very well for a small library, but when the number of volumes becomes large a further index is needed to point out the titles of the work and the topics upon which they treat.

Since 1875 we have caused six supplementary catalogues to be published, containing a large number of works added annually to the library. In these, two entries for each work were made, under the author when known, and under the title of his work. But these additions have become so numerous and extensive that it has been found impracticable, even by those most familiar with the books, to ascertain whether or not a given volume is in the library.



In the present catalogue, arranged upon the same plan as a dictionary, are presented the names of the authors, the titles of their several works, and often, the subject on which they treat, with numerous cross-references, so that any one may, by means of it, find any book on any subject contained in the library. This presentation of the subjects or topic, of which the several authors treat, will be found very useful and advantageous to those using the library; and the same plan has been adopted in most of the catalogues issued by the public libraries in this country. There are also given, under the author's name, the contents of numerous works, treating upon different subjects with occasional cross-references to the same. In order to accomplish this, it has been necessary to enter each book twice, at least, and often three or more times.

Under the direction of the trustees, this work has been done with much ability and faithfulness by Miss Lucy Ellen Wright, the daughter of our librarian, with such assistance as her father has been able to give her. We do not claim that this work has been so done as to be without mistakes or errors of any kind, for we have found errors in the best catalogues; but we trust it will be found that it will compare favorably with most of the work of the same kind, issued by the several public libraries in this state. Miss Wright has received valuable aid and advice from Miss Bean the librarian of the Brookline public library. She has also constantly consulted various catalogues placed by the trustees at her disposal, such as the Brookline, Boston, Quincy, Fall River and other town and city catalogues. She has also consulted, with advantage, the catalogue of the State library of Massachusetts, the American catalogue, and the bibliographical works of Allibon, Brunet, Lowndes and others contained in the library.

This catalogue embraces 9380 volumes, but does not include the very valuable and numerous public documents and pamphlets which have been gradually reduced to order by the assiduous care of our excellent librarian Rev. Daniel Wright, and which we have felt compelled to leave uncatalogued till some future occasion.

(Judge) JOHN WILLIAM BACON, in 1882.





## DR. ISAAC MORRILL PLACE

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Fifty years ago in November, 1832, being then a boy of seventeen summers, I went to bed one night in Dedham village, full of anticipation of the pleasure which I was to experience on the morrow when I was to come to Natick with my mother and sister and a younger brother. I was to be wakened early, as I was to feed and harness the team which I was to drive. But I needed no arousing. I hardly slept any, and shortly after midnight began to wish for the dawning of the day, and the time to arrive for me to get ready my horse. So I looked, from time to time, impatient through the window of my chamber and suddenly was startled by a remarkable exhibition in the heavens. There were others who witnessed the same phenomena. In your bright and newsy sheet, the Natick Citizen, to which I am a subscriber, and which I and my wife and sisters and daughters and sons and grandsons, eagerly seek and read weekly, I find an interesting allusion to the wonderful star shooting exhibition of that morning, by my maternal cousin, Alexander Wheelock Thayer.

“On the morning of the 13th of November,” says he, “about three o’clock, I was awakened by a candle flashing in my eyes, which, as they opened, beheld Travis’ pale face, while the ears heard words to this effect:

“‘Wheelock, get up, the Judgment day has come; the stars are all falling.’ These may not be the exact words, but fifty years have passed since I heard them. Three weeks before, I had completed my sixteenth year. Half a dozen years previously, one of my school books had been a little, thin volume on Astronomy, prepared by Wilkins, later of the firm of Wilkins & Carter. Towards its end was a short extract from Humboldt and Bonpland’s travels in South America, describing a wonderful meteoric shower, observed by them (exactly thirty-four years



before) at Cumana. The words 'the stars are falling' had hardly been spoken when it flashed into my mind this might be what Humboldt saw. I uttered a loud exclamation of delight, which somewhat reassured Travis, as my relation of the Humboldt story did the others, and I sprang to the head of the outside stairs above mentioned. What I saw has been described a hundred times, but no description gives any adequate conception of the beauty and grandeur of the spectacle."

Thayer was afterward with me at Phillips Academy, Andover, and at Harvard, and was then remarkable for his power of keen observation. Him we met at South Natick that day, and his mother and sister Susan, alas! not now living on the earth; and his mother's sisters, the late Mrs. Adams and Miss Bigelow and Mrs. Stowe, mother of the now living and learned Professor Calvin E. Stowe, whose wife, Harriet Beecher Stowe, has woven the incidents of the every day life of the people and families of the Old Town into a novel whose characters will always be famous, and whose descriptions and narratives of New England life, as it was a century ago, have rarely been equalled and never been surpassed.

What a day was that! and what a drive from Dedham village to Dover, by Dr. Sanger's, crossing the bridge from east to west, and alighting at the old Bigelow house, which stood on the lot now enclosed in the Eliot Square. After dinner at Natick, we drove to this house. Here then was living Dr. Isaac Morrill. He was born in Wilmington, in 1748, and was the eldest son of Rev. Isaac Morrill, and three years the senior brother of Eliakim Morrill, my maternal grandfather, of whom I had the honor to speak on an occasion similar to this, one year ago today.

Dr. Isaac Morrill came from Wilmington to Natick (Old Town) in the year 1771, being then a young man of twenty-three years; and here, Oct. 2, 1774, he wedded Mary, eldest child and daughter of Nathaniel Mann of Needham, whose wife was Mary, daughter of Rev. Jonathan Townsend, the first minister of the town of Needham, and who moved into Natick between 1761 and 1763, had a farm at the north part of the





town, which he bought of Abel Perry and one Metcalf, and had three children born in Needham—Mary, Ebenezer, Samuel.

Nathaniel Mann was a descendant of Rev. Samuel Mann of Wrentham (H. U. 1665), a classmate of Benjamin Eliot and Caleb Cheeshahteumuk, the only Indian graduate of Harvard College. Among his descendants was the late Horace Mann (B. U.), who died Aug. 2, 1853.

It is pretty well established that an Indian named Obsco was once the owner of the greater part of Dr. Morrill's land, who bought it of his wife's father, and built a home in 1775 a few feet in front of this spot, the frame of which was moved back in 1852 and built over into the present style.

Fifty years ago I sat at the table of my granduncle in this old house, of which he was still the owner, and in which he had then lived fifty-seven years with Mary, his wife, who had died Dec. 23, 1831, aged 82. Thayer and I (then at Phillips Academy, Andover) visited the venerable doctor again in the summer of 1838. He then talked of the life he had lived, of his experience as a physician, of the multitude of children who had been born in the town within his intimate knowledge, and of other matters which he thought might interest young men.

Turning to my diary which I kept in the year 1838, I find the following:

"Wednesday, Aug. 22—Went to Needham and Natick. Spent the forenoon in Needham, with Dr. Morrill and Mrs. Walker and Phœbe Morrill. Visited the church—very pretty." And then follow these words: "Dr. Isaac Morrill is 90 years of age, and retains his faculties to a wonderful degree. He practiced physic till he was 80 years of age, but he is now childish, yet manly. It is the way to die, to go down to the grave as a shock of corn ripe for the sickle. Went to Natick in the afternoon, etc." I never saw him again alive. He died the following spring, May 5th, 1839, aged 91 years.

In this house were born his daughter Mary, who married —Walker and died Mar. 8th, 1870, aged 87; Phœbe, who died Mar. 3d, aged 85, and his son Samuel, who died in Brookfield, date unknown. His widow died in Brookfield, Feb. 5th, 1882, aged 92. These and two of Mrs. Walker's and two of





Samuel's sons, all who died in middle life, were buried in the Morrill tomb in the old graveyard by the church in soil hallowed by the tread of the Apostle John Eliot, and John, his son, and that beloved contemporary and historian, Daniel Gookin,—father of Rev. Daniel Gookin, (H. U. 1669) of Sherborn—who was the first English magistrate chosen to be ruler over the praying Indians in 1656 and governing the Indians subject to us, especially those of Natick, Ponkapoag, etc., in the time of the “High and mighty Prince Charles II. by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.”

This whole territory is historical. “Sacred to the memory of” seems written on every wall and aged tree, and field and hill and grove and rock and river, from Nonantum to Sherborn, and it is well to pause here by the spot where once dwelt that good physician who, for more than half a century immediately succeeding the commencement of its civilization, ministered to the afflicted.

Dr. Isaac Morrill sold this place to Nahum Cutter, April 1st, 1836: recorded in Middlesex Deeds (should have been Norfolk), book 350, page 457. From Cutter it passed to John Welles, April 20th, 1836: recorded in Norfolk Deeds, lib. 137, page 177. From John Welles to Mrs. Isabella P. Hunnewell, April 1st, 1846: recorded with Norfolk Deeds, lib. 159, page 317. From her it passed into H. H. Hunnewell's hands. H. H. Hunnewell's house does not stand on Dr. Morrill's land.

Walter Hunnewell built his present house in 1875, on the Dr. Morrill land. In 1852 the old house was moved back its width or a little more, newly covered, enlarged and finished up as it now stands. It now belongs to Mrs. Sargent, Mr. Hunnewell's youngest daughter. The land was originally very poor. It bordered on what was in olden times called Saw-Mill Pond, later on Bullard's Pond, now Lake Waban; and he used to say of his estate that he had feed and water enough for one hundred head of cattle. The Doctor, as I remember him, was a pleasant old gentleman, a welcome visitor in a sick room, but strenuous against cold water as a drink in fevers. He always rode horse-back with saddle-bags of medicine under him. When he



stopped to visit a patient the saddle-bags were carried on his arm. He always had a little riding stick in his hand, such as he might pick up or break from some tree or bush. It happened one day that he broke off a willow, and when he got home he stuck it into the bank by his house to have it handy to take again; but it was left there, took root and grew till it got to be more than two feet through, and was cut down in 1852 to make room for moving the house back.

West of the doctor's house, opposite his land, stands a mile-stone. The distance from Boston is now about 14 miles. It very likely may have been here when the doctor first came. This part of Needham, to Saw-Mill Brook, was Natick up to 1797.

SAMUEL B. NOYES, of Canton, in 1883.  
(Grandson of Eliakim Morrill).

[Reprint]

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## A NARRATION OF OLD TIME INCIDENTS IN SOUTH NATICK

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No matter how far, and how long away I am from South Natick, I never forget it, and I have often thought of transcribing some of my recollections of old time incidents and old time residents for the interest and benefit of the present generation. All the people who lived there fifty years ago are as clearly in my memory now as if it were only yesterday that I saw them last. We all were neighbors; near to each other in real, if, in the New England fashion of that day, unexpressed sympathy. And it was a neighborhood of high intelligence. Next to my home on one side lived William Edwards. Whether he was a first class tailor or not, he was a naturalist of the type of Hugh Miller, author of the old Red Sandstone. Wellesley College discovered his value and made him one of its instructors. Opposite was Newell Ingalls, in whose shoeshop I spent many an hour discussing philosophy, phrenology, civics and political





economy. Not that we used all these terms, but those were the things we talked. Then came our good Doctor Townsend, who had been in India, whose brother was a distinguished Adjutant General of the United States Army, and with whose first wife I read German, Schillier's Robbers. His kind of a country doctor will I hope, not pass away. Next to the doctor was that rare controversial theologian, Deacon Phillips, in whose carpenter shop, on rainy days, I heard all about the objectionable thirty-nine articles of the Westminster creed. On the hill just by the boundary between Natick and Dover was the cottage of Isaac Greenwood, who used to help on my father's farm, and to whose unfailing stories of Parson Badger and other worthies of an earlier day, I listened with delight, as I dropped the corn and potatoes which the men were planting.

Mr. Solomon Fuller, (we always addressed the men who worked for us as mister), used to come from his Dover home to help out in hoeing and harvesting, was also interesting in his reminiscences. It was thus that I became familiar with Natick history, and got the foundation of my education in ethical studies and economics, and almost all my practical knowledge of botany and mineralogy, for did I not go into the fields with Rev. Edward Stone, our Unitarian clergyman after Rev. Thomas B. Gannett, and hammer out specimens of quartz, serpentine and other rocks, besides reading Sallust with his sister-in-law, Miss Townsend? Our village politician was our storekeeper and postmaster, Moses Eames, a persistent Jackson Democrat, who never ceased the hopeless effort to convert my father from his errors as a sturdy Webster Whig. He was of the kind which buttonhole their man, and will not let go, so my father would say after coming back from the postoffice in the evening. At the discussion in the village lyceum, in which Aaron Sanford, the cabinet maker, and Col. Abraham Bigelow, the father of my schoolmates, William P. Bigelow and Mrs. Abbie F. Gale were prominent, Mr. Eames would find his audience and hold the floor. William Edward used to go fishing and shooting successfully, as we all did, but usually with scant success, but William Parmenter, the only man of leisure in South Natick, coming there at a late date, with his interesting wife and daughters, Lizzie and



Martha, with whom we boys used to walk up to the Natick high school after it was opened in about 1852-3; was a really professional sportsman.

And who could ever forget Martin Broad, the butcher, Miller Robbins, to whose mill I used to take our corn to be ground, watching the grinding. The miller could not talk while busy with the machinery, but blacksmith John Robbins, and later Charles Bailey, to each of whom I would drive our horse and big oxen to be shod, would make pithy remarks while blowing the bellows and heating shoes to be fitted to the feet of the animals. But Obed Mackintosh, who made and mended our winter boots and the summer shoes we wore when we had to wear them and be denied the delight of going barefoot, could and did talk no end while we watched his cobbling. There was no denying his skill as a fifer on muster days, for he told us of it himself. Charles Bailey's brother, Goin, kept the tavern after John Gilman left it to go to Baltimore with his family to live. I wonder how it fared with his three daughters; the brilliant Angeline, Mary Anne, who wrote such wonderful compositions at school and Elizabeth. Oliver Bacon and his excellent wife are well remembered by their gift of the library building, their house with the great elms in front was Parson Badger's.

Dr. Spaulding, the first village doctor I knew, was succeeded by Dr. Chandler, whose children, Nancy, Maria and Charles, were my schoolmates. The cholera carried off the doctor and his daughter, Nancy, and Dr. Sewall, who had his office in John Atkins' house and who married Joan Gannett, took his place, and gave way soon after to Dr. Townsend.

To this incomplete list of our village people and with no thought of undervaluing their worth, I must say that the influence upon myself of the Gannett family appears to me as I look back over the years in which I enjoyed their friendship, to have been singularly good. I was always allowed to browse in their library which was anything but up-to-date, but it had much that was best in literature. I went to school with their daughters, Joan, Mary (Mrs. Charles Holyoke), Sarah, (Mrs. John Hastings) and their sons, Stiles and Alfred. The eldest daughter, Debby, married Charles R. Sedgwick, a prominent lawyer of





Syracuse and a representative in congress during the Civil war. As a young girl, Mrs. Sedgwick was at Brook Farm, of which she wrote an account in the March Atlantic of 1900, describing in it the game she played, throwing pillows with Hawthorne. I think she was the loveliest woman, excepting my wife, whom I ever have known. The Sedgwick home was frequented by George William Curtis, and his elder brother, of whose worth, as Mrs. Sedgwick has told me, too little was generally known, Governor John A. Andrew, Richard H. Dana, their neighbors, Andrew D. White, later of Cornell, and Rev. Samuel May, with many others of that class.

In thinking of the delightful Gannett family I am reminded of Jackson Bigelow, whose house is just above the canal bridge, his wife and her lovely sister, Ellen, who married John Cleland. The sisters were relatives I think, of the gifted authoress, Lydia Maria Childs. The trooping memories bring to mind the family of Col. Bigelow. A much loved niece, Susan Thayer, died early. A nephew, Wheelock Thayer, went to Harvard, and afterwards lived in Germany, where he wrote a valuable memoir of Beethoven. I hope that William Bigelow's daughter will find time from her Walnut Hill school to write the annals of her father's family.

The Ladies' Social Circle met regularly at the houses of the members and discussed the books of the day which were bought for their library. It was the time of George Eliot's stories, Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Wide, Wide World.

No one who lived that country life would ever be willing to forget the village school and its teachers, its work and its play. The terms were short, perhaps four months in the winter and three in the summer, for school funds soon ran out. It was usually a school master in winter and a school mistress in summer. I went to school to Miss Susan Thayer and Miss Rebecca Fisher, a daughter I believe of Mrs. Leach, whose house is preserved in its old form by the Hunnewells. She was a dear friend and relative of my mother. Miss Fisher married Mr. Abbott, and with him taught young ladies at the Spingler Institute in New York. Miss Joanna Dana was my last teacher. The men teachers were Mr. Kingsbury, who for long after, kept a



boys' academy in Wrentham; Oscar Parker, a Harvard student; and James T. Allen, brother of Nathaniel Allen, at whose West Newton school I attended two terms. They were all excellent teachers, and what famous work we did, going through Adams', Emerson's and Greenleaf's arithmetics and Bailey's algebra, two English grammars, Mitchell's geography, American history, its name I do not now recall, but I remember the history and its pictures of the battle on Lake Erie, the shooting at Lexington and the surrender of Cornwallis, Cutter's anatomy, physiology and hygiene, writing books, composition, drawing, spelling matches, speaking pieces, reading aloud from the New Testament each morning and afternoon from a reader, and repeating mottoes at the close of each day, such, for instance, as "Count each day lost whose low descending sun sees at thy hand no worthy action done." This does not take in the daily singing of "Lightly Row," "Happy Land," "Come with thy lute," etc. The influence was good on the smaller pupils of the big boys and big girls who sat in the back seats and to whose recitations the younger ones listened with great interest. I do not mean that I did this when reading *sub rosa*, Marryatt's tales lent me by George Sanford, the *Pirates* which Frank Bigelow kindly furnished for my edification, and the *Arabian Knights*, which came from some other schoolmates.

We ran, climbed the old oak trees, wrestled, jumped, coasted down hill, played marbles, and occasionally fought enough to make the nose bleed, and generally had a good time. Moses Bullard taught wonderfully good hand writing at an evening school, to which each carried his own small oil lamp. Those were good days. But better still were to come at the Natick High school, taught by Abner Rice and his assistants, Miss Tolman and Miss Harriet Bacon. Walking to school and back every day, taking luncheon along, was no hardship, it was fun. But I was so loaded up with learning acquired at the village and Nat Allen's school, to say nothing of a term at the George Walker Holliston academy, that I soon began Latin and was reading "Jacobus Habuit," poor latin, but so easy, and studying Crook and McClintock's Greek grammar, all of which meant going to college, something never before dreamed of. Of the





delightful high school days I will not now try to write, nor of my winter prior to going to Cambridge, in teaching school in the old North Brook, other than to refer to the reading some of Cicero's orations, and Plato's Georgias with Rev. Elias Nason, John William Bacon and B. F. Ham, the Natick lawyer, and Mr. Rice, while I was boarding with Mr. Bacon's mother.

I have not written of the other South Natick clergymen. Perhaps I have written more than the present generation in South Natick may care to read; but I can assure them that it was a wholesome, sincere and simple life we used to live there. How we pitied the city boys when they came on their summer vacations. What did they know, poor things, of catching pick-erel, setting snares for partridges and rabbits, shooting squirrels, making figures to scare off crows, going in swimming, skating on the river, husking corn, eating luscious peaches, plums, apricots, apples, grapes and all kinds of berries without money and without price, of sleigh riding, singing schools in winter evenings, of crops of clover, timothy and herds grass and all the other farm products? In their brick homes and paved streets what could they see of the beautiful country? They could not even stretch themselves on the grass, flat on their backs and watch the clouds, and worse than all as I have come to think, some of them were so rich that they did not have to work or help their parents or learn to do things. It was the real life, the country life and they were real folks in South Natick.

(Gen.) ALFRED S. HARTWELL.

Honolulu, T. H.



## THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF WATER FROM LAKE COCHITUATE INTO BOSTON

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Mrs. Mary R. Esty of this town has presented to the South Natick Historical Society a program of the Water Celebration in Boston when Cochituate water was first introduced into that city. This took place Oct. 25, 1848. As this lake, formerly called Long Pond, but now known by its more musical Indian name of Lake Cochituate—is located within the borders of our town, we feel that any matter relating to it should have a place in Natick's History.

"The weather, on the day of the celebration was propitious, and, at the break of day, a salute of one hundred guns, accompanied by the ringing of the bells opened the ceremonies. At an early hour the streets were filled with people, attracted by the decorations, mottoes and devices by which the principal avenues through which the procession was to pass were embellished. These were very numerous, well-arranged, and in good taste, and some of them very beautiful.

"Previous to the literary exercises of the celebration, there was a procession, embracing a cavalcade, consisting of, first, a Military Escort; second, the Fire Companies of Boston and the neighboring cities and towns, dressed in their various uniform; third, a cavalcade composed of a very numerous body of horsemen; fourth the Civil Procession in eight divisions.

"The route followed was through the principal streets of the city to the Common, to which entrance was made through the Park street gate. It took about two hours for the whole cavalcade to pass a given point."





The following is the program :

## WATER CELEBRATION

BOSTON, OCTOBER 25th, 1848

Exercises at the Fountain

### I. Hymn

By George Russell, Esq.

To be sung by the Handel and Haydn Society and the Audience,

—Tune "Old Hundred."

Eternal ! uncreated God !

Source of our being ! Fount of Love,

Our songs ascend to thine abode;

Thou art the joy of worlds above

The sea is thine: at thy command,

From darkness deep, its waters came

The Sons of God beheld thy hand,

And in loud chorus praised thy Name.

Rivers and lakes and springs declare,

That Thou art wise, and kind, and good;

Both man and beast thy bounties share,

Thou givest drink; thou givest food.

Behold! from yonder distant lake

A stream our city now supplies

We bid it welcome:—come partake:

To-day its waters greet our eyes!

Let old and young and rich and poor,

Join in one full harmonious song!

Let every tongue its praises pour,

And swell the Anthem loud and long!

### II. Prayer by Rev. Daniel Sharp, D.D.

### III. Ode

By James Russell Lowell, Esq.

To be sung by the School Children.

#### I

My name is Water; I have sped,

Through strange dark ways untried  
before,

By pure desire of friendship led.

Cochituate's Ambassador;

He sends four royal gifts by me

Long life, health, peace and purity.

#### III

In that far isle whence ironwilled

The new world's sires their bark un-  
moved

The fairies acorn-cups I filled

Upon the toadstool's silver board!

And 'neath Herne's oak for Shakspeare's  
sight

Strewed moss and grass with diamonds  
bright.

#### II

I'm Ceres' cupbearer; I pour

For flowers and fruits and all their kin

Her crystal vintage from of yore

Stored in old Earth's selectest bin

Flora's Falernian ripe, since God

The winepress of the deluge trod.

#### IV

No fairies in the Mayflower came,!

And lightsome as I sparkle here,

For mother Bay State, busy dame,

I've toiled and trudged this many a year

Throbbled in her Engine's iron veins

Twirled myriad spindles for her gains.



## V

I too can weave, the warp I set  
 Through which the sun his shuttle  
 throws,  
 And bright as Noah saw it, yet  
 For you the arching rainbow glows,  
 A sight in Paradise denied  
 To unfallen Adam and his bride.

## VI

When winter held me in his grip,  
 You seized and sent me o' the wars,  
 Ungrateful! in a prison ship  
 But I forgive, not long a slave,  
 For soon as summer south winds blew  
 Homeward I fled, disguised as dew.

## VII

For countless services I'm fit,  
 Of use, of pleasure and of gain,  
 But lightly from all bonds I flit:  
 Incapable as fire of stain;  
 From mill and washtub I escape  
 And take in heaven my proper shape.

## VIII

So, free myself, today, elate  
 I come from far, o'er hill and mead,  
 And here, Cochituate's Envoy, wait  
 To be your blithesome Garrymede  
 And brim your cups with metor true  
 That never will make slaves of you.

#### IV. Report of Hon. Nathan Hale in Behalf of the Water Commissioners.

#### V. Address by the Mayor.

#### VI. Water Let on

#### VII. Chorus from the Oratorio of Elijah.

Thanks be to God! He laveth the thirsty land. The waters gather; they rush along; they are lifting their voices. The stormy billows are high, their fury is mighty: But the Lord is above them, and Almighty.

"At the conclusion of the addresses the Mayor asked the assembly if it were their pleasure that the water should now be introduced. An immense number of voices responded "Aye!" Whereupon the gate was gradually opened, and the water began to rise in a strong column, six inches in diameter, increasing rapidly in height, until it reached an elevation of eighty feet.

"After a moment of silence, shouts rent the air, the bells began to ring, cannon were fired, and rockets streamed across the sky. The occasion was one of intense excitement which it is impossible to describe, but which no one can forget. In the evening there was a grand display of fireworks, and all the public buildings, and many of the private houses were brilliantly illuminated."





The literary exercises were all of a high character, and we have given the entire program. The ode by James Russell Lowell is particularly noticeable for its gracefulness, and for its beautiful imagery; and it adds lustre to the name of this distinguished poet and author.

The description of the details of the celebration was taken from the "History of the Introduction of Pure Water into the City of Boston," compiled by a member of the Boston Water Board.

Ed. Historical Collections.

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## NATICK'S TOWN HALL

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My earliest recollection of a town meeting in Natick goes back to the year 1859. The vestry or basement of the Universalist church on East Central Street was the scene and all persons present appeared to be the actors.

On our way to or from school, attracted by the commotion, a party of us boys drifted near the door of the vestry to see what might be going on. Everybody seemed to be busy, we boys were totally ignored and, as may be inferred, we soon managed to get inside. If we visited the place out of idle curiosity, we certainly lingered as long as possible from motives of interest and enthusiasm. For myself I can truly say that the impression produced on the mind by the object lesson presented was both pleasing and permanent.

The basement was comfortably crowded, very few settees available or apparently desired as nearly all the men seemed to be on the alert, bustling about or gathered in little knots here and there, arguing, bantering or prophesying results in a spicy but good humored way. I do not remember that there were any set speeches while we were there. At one side was a small raised platform on which the officials were stationed and a steady



stream of voters was passing along and landing in their ballots on the candidates or question before the meeting.

Of course, being mere children, we could only imperfectly comprehend or grasp the significance of the various proceedings but to every one of us the affair seemed novel, attractive and inspiring. While we relished the activity, sparkle and fun pervading the assembly we did not fail to notice that there was very little confusion and we then and there received our first and enduring notion of a free people governing themselves and regulating their affairs according to the methods of a New England town meeting. The next time I attended a town meeting was during the war and it was held in School House Hall in District No. 2. This hall included the entire third floor of the building now called it the Wilson school and at and before the period mentioned had been in frequent use for concerts, lectures, dances and entertainments of every description. Here were held the public gatherings during the great strike in 1860 when the shoe-makers vindicated their right to "Cash and Twenty Cents a Pair" to the ultimate satisfaction of the entire community. Some of the eloquence delivered on those occasions and at the war meetings later on, was of the most fervid type but, nevertheless, the proceedings were always fascinating, orderly and very effective. When, in the course of events, the increase of children in the district required that this hall should be partitioned off into school rooms, the town was found occupying the old Methodist Church as a Hall. This edifice stood on the land on Summer Street now occupied in part by the Central Fire Station. Herein occurred some lively wrangles, notably in 1870 when, after a stormy session and a division of the house, the election of a School Committee was set aside on the ground that the check list had not been used at the previous meeting.

Soon after, in 1873, the town began to use the hall in the new brick structure just then erected by Mr. Clark, but the great fire of January 13, 1874 destroyed that with many other buildings in the centre of the town, and subsequent meetings were held for a short period in the Catholic Church basement and in the Tabernacle, so-called, a temporary, wooden, one-story affair put up with wonderful despatch by the Congregational Society on





the vacant land opposite the southeast corner of the Common. Upon the completion of the new Clark Block in 1875 the town resumed under lease the use of Concert Hall for meetings and have continued that practice to the present moment.

From the foregoing it will be seen that, for the past fifty years at least, Natick has had a varied experience in the matter of a hall for town purposes. Inspection of the records shows the same to be the fact throughout the history of our community.

From 1746 when Natick was organized as a Precinct or Parish, later from 1781 when incorporated as a Town, and onward to near the middle of the nineteenth century, meetings of the inhabitants were generally held in the church or school house. The idea of a Town House, properly so called, seems never to have appealed very forcibly to our sturdy predecessors. The population increased slowly, if at all. The hardships entailed by wars and rumors of wars fell heavily on Massachusetts towns.

The incessant "migrating" of those days showed that a large element of the people were not firmly settled as to their place of permanent abode. Moreover, towards the close of the 18th century dissensions were rife on various topics. These were founded on local, religious or political reasons, probably, but the upshot was that Natick was sadly divided against itself and little progress was made in any direction for nearly a generation. If, during this period the notion of a Town Hall existed in the minds of any, it remained undeveloped until 1835 when a determined movement was started to secure a grant for said purpose. The Boston & Worcester railroad had then recently been opened for traffic, the upper village undoubtedly began to exhibit signs of growth and to many it seemed the proper thing to have a building for municipal affairs. Opposition was still strong, however, and it was not until 1841 that the project was carried through and Natick became the possessor of its first and only town hall. How fierce was the conflict may be realized from the closeness of the vote on one of the vital issues of the contest, 65 to 67. Indeed it is doubtful whether it could have been brought about were it not for the fact that the entire expense was to be met by the money returned at that time, as sur-





plus revenue, by the U. S. Government to the cities and towns of the country; and Natick's share of the same was voted to be applied for the said purpose.

The auditorium of the new building when finished was 34 x 44 feet. Although it may have been roomy enough at first, the rapid growth of the shoe business with the consequent influx of new residents must have soon proved that the accommodations were inadequate and so we are not surprised to find that fifteen years later in 1856 the citizens practically discarded the new Hall as a place of meeting and the town recommenced the roving method as noted at the beginning of this sketch. The edifice itself, while shorn of its glories as a hall, assumed new lustre shortly when, having been moved from its first location to the lot at the corner of Morse and East Central streets, it became the abiding place of our High School and so continued for twenty years or more.

The writer well remembers how deeply he was impressed with the grandeur of the school-room on his first entrance within its portals. The lofty ceiling, the mottoes or proverbs in three languages fastened on the walls, not forgetting the glass case of apparatus and instruments for experiments in the northeast corner. I dare say that many yet living will recall the years spent in that old high school building as the happiest in their lives. Eventually, however, the pressure of scholars and other causes seemed to render imperative a larger and better appointed building for the school and so, in 1877, it was voted to erect a new High School building and the site chosen was where it stands to-day at the corner of Grant and East Central streets. No further use could be found for the old structure and forlorn, deserted and partially neglected for some considerable time, our first and only town hall was finally sold at auction for what sum of money it would bring.

Its service as a town hall was of so brief duration that, as such, not many hallowed recollections can cluster around it. No doubt it was the arena of numerous desperate forensic battles. Eloquence, wit and strategy abounded, while it is traditional and obvious that the men of those days were valiant fighters and



could generally express themselves anywhere so that you could easily know what they meant.

It is in its secondary character as the home of our high school for a considerable period that the building commands the widest interest. Comparatively few living to-day are aware that the dingy, awkward looking structure now located on the east side of Washington street, just south of Wood's block, removed thither by the purchaser at the said auction and remodeled into a tenement house and blacksmith shop, had ever served as a town hall for Natick; but scores yet survive who recognize with affectionate regard the ancient building as the Old High School House.

Of the various attempts to persuade Natick to found a suitable town hall, commensurate with its wealth and prospective growth, but one requires a passing notice. In 1868 a determined effort was made to commit the town to the project. It proceeded so far that the Partridge lot was secured for a location but the building is not yet in evidence. The situation is ideal, on the south side of East Central street between Park and Church streets and next eastward of the Common. The lot is sightly, roomy and convenient; and there can be no doubt that a municipal building of fair proportions and style installed thereon would create a favorable impression of our town in the minds of the numerous transients who use the electric lines. But it is doubtful if our people could be induced, at present, to tax themselves for a new Town Hall. A goodly number are well satisfied with things as they are now, and consider that it is wiser, safer and cheaper to hire accommodations for town purposes. This seems to have been the controlling idea of our citizens from the outset.

When Natick becomes a city, as the signs are now, it will doubtless be advisable if not necessary, to found a municipal building and it is thought that no more eligible site could be procured than the lot secured and reserved since 1868, as pointed out above. Moreover, it is likely that the erection of a fine city hall on that spot would stimulate activity to cover the neighboring lots to the eastward, now desolate and dreary and so near





the centre of the village, with noble structures which would be more in keeping with modern progress and with the general aspect of the town.

Then, assuredly, and until then, probably, the old building on Washington street will enjoy the unique distinction of being the first and, in a proper sense, the only genuine Town Hall ever possessed by Natick.

JAMES McMANUS, Town Clerk.

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## A NATICK ROMANCE OF COLONIAL TIMES

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The events connected with the history of our fathers cannot fail to interest the reader; and he will, I doubt not, feel amply repaid for the perusal of the following "plain unvarnished tale" of facts.

The indefatigable, and in many instances successful, labors of the apostle Eliot, in civilizing and christianizing the Indians of Massachusetts, are very generally known and highly appreciated. He, in fact, adopted the only rational method for the accomplishment of his purpose. It was a favorite maxim with him that the savages must be in a good degree civilized before they can be evangelized. Hence he fed them at first with the sincere milk of the word, instead of such strong meat, as the most metaphysical mind can with difficulty digest. By collecting together a number of families in permanent habitations, by teaching them how to construct more comfortable dwellings, than those to which they had been accustomed, by instructing them in agriculture, orcharding and some of the most important of the mechanic arts, and by inducing them to understand and obey the more practical precepts of the gospel, he made them feel that godliness is profitable as it respects the life that now is, as well as the regard to the hope which it inspires of a happier life to come.



By these means, under Divine Providence, in the course of a few years he had the satisfaction of seeing a number of "praying towns," inhabited by the children of the forest. The principal of these was Natick. Here the rude wigwam was succeeded by the decent framed house; the apple tree took place of the trees of the wood; grain waved in the rays of the sun, where not long before stood a wilderness impervious to his beams, and domesticated flocks and herds grazed in the open pastures, where but lately the wild beasts of the forest alone were wont to prowl for prey. A school for instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic was founded on the spot, where ignorance and indolence had recently reposed.—Prayer, praise and thanksgiving were heard to ascend to the Father of all good, in the spirit of joyful hope, where, ere while, the diabolical powow was howled forth to the imaginary father of evil, through a servile and soul degrading fear. In the sacred though lowly chapel, the duties of Christianity were taught, and its holy rites administered, and many of the red men walked in its commandments and ordinances blameless.

Such was the condition of this settlement, when a respectable English family moved into it and fixed their residence among the Aborigines. The father and his sons were competently skilled in the trade of the carpenter, mason, smith and cordwainer; the mother and daughters in knitting, spinning, and making garments. In addition to these employments this family cultivated a farm and managed a dairy. They were of essential service in assisting the devout and philanthropic Eliot, not only by exhibiting before their neighbors examples of piety, virtue, industry and economy but by instructing them in the most useful arts. In church, in school, and in their daily occupations, they mingled with the natives on the footing of perfect equality.

At this time there resided at this place a native, but little past the age of 20 years, whose form was that of manly beauty, for which the aboriginal Americans were so justly celebrated. He had been for a considerable time a pupil of Eliot, and an inmate of his family. He had adopted the English costume and manners. In his person and dress he was remarkably neat and tasteful, and in his deportment graceful and prepossessing. He





had studied, with considerable success, several of the liberal arts and sciences, was well instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and, as he gave abundant evidences that he had embraced this religion with his whole heart, Eliot was now employing him as schoolmaster and occasional preacher among the lost sheep of his tribe. Civilization had not rendered him effeminate; for he retained all his native vigor, and might justly be said to have gained the true object of education, that is, "the possession of a sound mind in a sound body." In addition to his other qualifications, he was skillful in the use of all the simples, known in his nation to be efficacious in the cure of diseases; and was not unfrequently called upon as a physician, by the white people in the neighboring towns, as well as by those of his own color in the place of his nativity.

Feeling unbounded gratitude toward Eliot, his spiritual guide and father, his friendship was very naturally extended to all the white people, with whom he became acquainted. He very naturally felt a peculiar attachment to the only white family in his native village, whom he frequently visited; and in process of time, he very naturally felt for their eldest daughter, Lydia, about his own age, a somewhat more powerful passion than friendship. Nor is it wholly unnatural to suppose that Lydia, who seldom saw any young man of her own complexion, should at least respect the good qualities of one, whose skin was some shades darker than her own. In reality, both felt a growing attachment to each other, though both were sensible of the inexpediency, if not propriety of cherishing it.

The increasing mutual fondness of these young persons could not long escape the penetrating eye of Lydia's watchful mother, who, together with her father, reprimanded her severely, and took measures entirely to prevent in future the visits of Bran, which was the name of our hero. His parents also felt that natural aversion to intermarriages, which is in a degree prevalent among all nations, even of the same color; and they used their most strenuous exertions to direct the affections of their son to a more suitable object.

What were the feelings, on this occasion, of the two lovers, (for so I may as well denominate them at once,) I leave





the reader to imagine; or if he or she insist on a description of them, one may be found in almost any play, novel or romance that is worth a perusal. I proceed with my narrative.

In a few days Lydia was taken ill with a fever. An English physician was sent for, who came and prescribed but without effect. Another was called in for consultation.—Still she grew worse, and at length was declared past recovery. At this solemn period, the parents were advised to consult Bran, who had been frequently successful in difficult cases. In that state of desperation, in which a drowning man catches at a straw, her parents consented. He came and prescribed; the fever speedily left her; and she gradually recovered her former state of health, strength and vivacity.

Which had the greatest efficacy in her restoration, the company and conversation of the physician or the simples, which he prescribed as medicine, I will not undertake to determine. Certain it is, that during his visits he found an opportunity to declare his strong and unalterable affection for his patient, and she to declare that, as she owed her life to him, the remainder of it should be devoted to the promotion of his happiness.

At this time King Philip's war was raging, and the English inhabitants, being jealous that the praying Indians would join their enemies, barbarously seized them, and hurried them down to an island in the harbor of Boston, where they were closely confined and carefully guarded. Bran, with a few others were permitted to remain at home, and assist in guarding the garrison of Lydia's father; but her parents still persisting in their opposition to her tender regard for him, immediately on the restoration of her health, sent her to Medfield, to reside with her uncle and aunt, who had no children; hoping that by uniting with those of her own nation only, her unhappy predilection would be overcome. Here her friends made use of every expedient they could devise, to induce her to transfer her affections. At one time they assailed her with the most serious expostulations; at another time attacked her with sarcastic raillery. Among other things, such doggerel as the following was handed round among her young associates:



“Fair Lydia thinks it right,  
Most closely to unite  
The red rose and the white.”  
“Sure Lydia would live on the cheapest plan;  
She asks nothing more than Indian Bran.”

But all these exertions drew nothing from the unfortunate girl but sighs and tears.

But a few days elapsed, ere another kind of trouble fell upon her and the rest of the inhabitants of that ill-fated town, in which she resided. At day break they were roused from their slumbers by the tremendous war whoop of the savage enemy; most of their buildings were reduced to ashes; a large number of the people were slaughtered, and many were led captive into the wilderness. Among the latter were Lydia and her uncle and aunt.

The news of this disaster reached Bran and his associates, in the course of the day, and he instantly resolved to rescue his beloved Lydia, or perish in the attempt. He disappeared from the garrison, exchanged his English dress for the costume of the savage warrior; painted his face in the most terrific style; supplied himself with the best of arms and ammunition; and filled his pack with a plenty of provisions, not forgetting a purse of money and a large flask of occapee, the Indian name for rum, well knowing the power of both, either in savage or civilized society. Thus provided he steered immediately for the Wachuset, having learned from spies some weeks before, that the general rendezvous of the enemy was in the neighborhood of that mountain.

By rapid travelling the whole of the succeeding night, and till late in the afternoon of the following day, most of the way through a pathless wilderness, he began to ascend the Wachuset. Having arrived at such a height, as enabled him to overlook the surrounding country, to a considerable extent, he halted to take a survey; and immediately discovered, at the distance of two or three miles, the smoke, high curling from the Indian encampment. He here seated himself upon a log, resolving to take some rest and refreshment, of which till now he had





scarcely thought since the commencement of his expedition. He watched and listened with intense anxiety. In less than half an hour he heard, at the distance of a mile or more from the camp, a most dismal funeral howl of hundreds of human voices, which was responded to by an innumerable multitude stationed in the reverberating forest. This arose from the party just returned from Medfield, and was repeated as many times as they had lost warriors in the assault. To these horrible howlings succeeded the triumphant yells of the savages, according to the numbers they had butchered and brought away captive; and these, too, were echoed from the rendezvous with astounding vociferation.

By the time the hideous noises had subsided, night overspread the dense forest, and no objects were visible excepting the gloomy light of the watch fires, which dimly shone among the towering evergreens.—A feast was speedily prepared with the spoils they had taken, and a large portion of the night was made hideous with noisy riot and reveling. Bran now matured his plan of operations for the morning. He determined to use that treachery, which, by savages, is called stratagem, and by civilized nations, policy in war. He resolved to appear among the enemy at sunrise, to declare himself a deadly foe to the white men, to enlist with those who desire their extermination, and to watch a favorable opportunity to desert with the object of his fondest affection.

At dawn of day he moved towards the camp, and at sunrise presented himself before it. The first object that met his eye was a lovely white female tied to a stake, surrounded with dry combustibles. At a short distance stood, spectators of this horrid scene, a group of despairing heart broken captives. Around, in smaller and larger circles, the savages were dancing and shouting with the frenzied ferocity of demons. At the sight of Bran all became instantly still and silent. A chief approached and conducted him within the inmost circle of warriors, in the centre of which the wretched victim was bound to the stake, ready to be sacrificed by lingering tortures to relentless cruelty. The victim was Lydia. Bran instantly knew her; but he was so disguised by dress and painting, that it was impossible for



her to recognize him. As far as in his power he concealed and suppressed his agonizing sensation, and addressed the warrior chiefs, in their own language, to the following effect:

“Brothers—I have been deceived. I thought the white men the children of the great and good spirit; but I have found them to be the spawn of Hobomok. Their religion is made of good and bad deeds.—They say they love Indians, but they only covet the land of Indians. I and all my tribe have been friends of white men; we are now their foes. The white men have made prisoners of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, friends. I hunger after revenge—I thirst for white men’s blood. I take hold of the same tomahawk with you.

Brothers—I know the young woman at the stake. Give her up to me. Let me be her torturer. Let her blood in part allay the burning thirst that is consuming my vitals. I know some of the captives. Let me torture them. It will increase their torment to know that it is inflicted by me.

Brothers—I have done. My heart is yours already. Will you accept my hand to help you to annihilate the white men?”

This talk was received with loud shouts of approbation, and Bran was adopted as a chief. Lydia was given up to his disposal. While he was releasing her from the stake, he informed her who he was, and what was his object, and how she must conduct herself. He told her he must appear to treat her with severity, in presence of the Indians, and that she must quietly submit, the better to conceal their intention to desert. Having unbound her, he carried her fainting to a wigwam, which was appropriated to his use, spread his blanket on the ground, placed her upon it and administered cordials and other refreshments, which he had brought with him, and which soon revived her. He now learned that the cause of her sentence to the torture was her endeavoring to escape from captivity; and that the rest of the prisoners were forced to be spectators of the sacrifice, to deter them from a similar attempt.

Bran’s next object was to get Lydia’s uncle and aunt into his possession. For this purpose he had invited to his wigwam, the three Indians who had captured Lydia and her relatives,





and consequently claimed them as their property. Here after telling them in her hearing, how he meant to torture her and her relations if he could gain possession of them, he made a handsome present in money to her late master, and the still more grateful donation of a generous dram of occapee; offering at the same time, to trade with the other two on the same conditions. His proposal was eagerly accepted, and the captives delivered into his custody. He would gladly have purchased more of them, but he feared that, by attempting too much, he should meet with a disastrous disappointment.

The three Indians having retired, well satisfied with his treatment of themselves and the prisoners, he gave the latter brief directions how to behave, and then invited the principal chiefs to a council of war. He told them that the white men knew where they were, and that on the next day a numerous and powerful army would attack them. He advised them, therefore, to send off towards the Connecticut river, the old men, women and children, and that the stout and brave warriors should remain where they now were to give the Englishmen battle. His plan was approved, and preparations immediately made to carry it into execution.

It was proposed that small guards should be placed on all sides of the camp and that the main body should sleep on their arms. As Bran's wigwam was one of the outermost, and barricaded with logs, it was designated as one of the guard houses, and his company was appointed as one of the guards. At dark, Bran planted his sentinel, in a line with the guard house, on each side of it, at a considerable distance from it and from each other, promising to relieve them at midnight, by those, who were to sleep at his quarters till that time. A death-like silence now prevailed throughout the camp, when Bran drew forth his flask of occapee, having previously infused into it a strong decoction of soporific herbs, and treated his joyous soldiers to a dram, which speedily laid them asleep for the night. They might now have easily destroyed the sleeping foemen; but, knowing that death would be avenged by the destruction of at least an equal number of their captive countrymen, they permitted them to sleep unmolested.





The desired hour of escape had now arrived. No time was lost. Bran slung his pack, replenished with provisions, and seized his trusty rifle. The uncle did the same with the best supplied pack and the best rifle and accoutrements, belonging to the Indians. The aunt and niece took each a brace of pistols and suitable ammunition, which the Indians had recently plundered from the English. Bran moved forward, Lydia and her aunt followed rank entire, and her uncle brought up the rear. The homeward march was rapid, being quickened by the most animating and appalling fear.

Daylight found them among the ruins of Lancaster. Here they secreted themselves among the rubbish in the cellar of a house that had been demolished, with most of the buildings in that town, but a few weeks before. As it happened, however, their fear of being pursued was groundless; for so soon as the Indians discovered that Bran had deserted with his white associates, and that their companions in arms were in a sleep, from which they could not rouse them, they were struck with a panic. They concluded that he was a sorcerer and that it would be in vain to pursue him. Fearing also that an English army might be on the way to meet them, they hastily decamped, leaving the sleeping guard, should they ever chance to wake, to follow them and explain the mystery of their enchantment.

Bran and his companions lay concealed the whole of the day, and at night set forward with renewed vigor and alacrity. They travelled all night; and the next morning the sun rose upon them in the hospitable township of Concord. The worthy inhabitants of this place welcomed them with hearty congratulations, and furnished them with horses and escort for the remainder of their journey. About noon the parents of Lydia had the inexpressible happiness of embracing their daughter, and brother and sister, and of most heartily thanking their deliverer; who, having scoured the paint from his countenance, appeared about as light colored and comely, in their eyes, as many of their sun-burnt countrymen. He now demanded the release of the 'praying Indians' from their cruel confinement, declaring that they were all as ready as himself to be serviceable to the Eng-



lish; and by the kind co-operation of Eliot and Gookin, they were soon restored to their dwellings.

The reader, especially the youthful reader, is, no doubt, anxious to know if this second Othello was finally married to Desdemona, whom he had twice rescued from the jaws of death. He was—and by ‘that holy man of God, the Apostle Eliot;’ and, so far as my information extends, they lived and died as virtuously, piously and happily, as most married couples, whose complexion is the same.

WILLIAM BIGELOW

Author of Bigelow’s History of Natick

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## THE NATICK EXILES OF 1675

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John Eliot had gathered the Christian or praying Indians into settled communities. There were seven such places at first: Natick, the oldest, where Waban lived, Magunkook, in what is now Ashland, Hassanmemeton in Grafton, Punkapoag in Canton, also at Marlboro, Littleton, and Wamesit, now Lowell.

In 1665 Natick had been inhabited twenty-four years. It had a bridge over the Quinobequin, or Charles river, a stockade fort, meeting house, dwellings, orchards and fruitful meadows, a church of fifty members, a school, preachers and teachers; 1500 copies of Eliot’s Indian bible had been published and distributed among the numerous native converts in Massachusetts bay and Plymouth colonies.

In June, 1675, began the conflict of races, known as Philips’ war. This sachem was the second son of Massasoit, who, as the Indian chieftain of the territory around Plymouth, had been the firm friend of the whites, ever since Samoset surprised the Pilgrims with the salutation “Welcome Englishmen.” On a visit of the sons of their old friend, the Plymouth magistrates had dignified Wamsutta and Metacomet with the old-world heroic names of Alexander and Philip. But in Grecian





history, the younger Alexander was the more famous general, while in the New England annals, Philip's story outshines his brother Alexander's fame. Had some Indian written his great sachem's biography, Metacomet would not have been metamorphosed into the name of the Macedonian fighter.

Philip was a man of marked ability. The colonies dreaded him almost as soon as he came into power. He sought to ally with his own Wampanoags the powerful Narragansetts against the English. With ill-concealed dislike he saw the growing strength of the colonists, and conceived the plan to league all the tribes east of the Connecticut to exterminate the pale faces. It was a bold scheme and he bravely staked his life to win. Philip's residence lay at the beautiful Mt. Hope, an eminence overlooking the bright waters of Narragansett Bay.

Both parties felt how important was the crisis at hand. Sassamon, once a teacher at Natick, had divulged Philip's purpose, and lost his life by Philip's spies. Waban, at Natick, warned the whites that when the leaves grew thick on the trees, war would come. Then was that anxious suspense on the eve of a mighty struggle, when the least step might precipitate a conflict, whose issues none could tell. In each century since, our land was thrilled with that same experience of awe-struck expectancy.

A few encounters showed our ancestors that the tactics of the savages in bush fighting told heavily upon the whites. Policy dictated the enlistment of friendly natives, used to the woods, of acute sight and hearing. Both sides needed the aid of the Christian Indians. By language, habits and kindred, they were drawn toward the sons of the forest; by religion and civilization received, they were drawn toward the cause of the Whites. The larger part of the converted Indians in the older, praying towns were steadfast to the English. But many dared not trust them. As soon as their fidelity was doubted, the hostile Indians tried to deepen the distrust. The excited settlers too readily became more prejudiced, so that much trouble came upon the friendly Indians upon false accusations.

In July a company of fifty-two men was recruited at Natick and despatched to the army at Mt. Hope. Soon after,



Oneco, with fifty Mohegan braves, came to Natick from Connecticut, volunteering their aid against Philip. In their first battle the Natick men did good service, and Job Nesutan was killed. He was Mr. Eliot's helper in learning the native language. Some of the English, however, spoke slightly of their allies. Military jealousy is apt to moderate the assistance of a co-operating force. Marines joined with infantry, or regulars with volunteers. White and black troops under the same flag, always decry the other party's worth as soldiers. But when Captains Hutchinson and Wheeler were ambuscaded by the Nipmucks, all would have been cut off had not two daring and skilful Indian guides led them back to Brookfield by a new path through the wood.

In November the Hassanemesit Indians, about 200 in number, were carried off by the hostile savages, who promised them plenty to eat and good treatment, if they went with them. Job Kattenanit escaped, but his family was taken away. It would seem that these praying Indians fared better among their heathen kindred than their Natick brethren among the Christian whites.

To go back a little. The General Court, to allay the popular apprehension, had ordered the praying Indians to confine their residence to five villages, Natick being the first,—nor to roam more than a mile away from these unless attended by white persons. This order broke up their hunting and fishing. Also superintendents were set over them, two coming here for that purpose. But the greatest injustice was the transportation of the Natick aborigines to Deer Island in Boston Harbor. In our day that island has been a place of detention for boys with evil proclivities. The great brick House of Reformation is well known to all who come to Boston, or who go thence by water.

Late on an October afternoon Captain Thomas Prentiss, with some soldiers and a few carts, came to bring away the villagers with some of their baggage to a place called the Pines. Watertown Arsenal is near the spot. But old Jethro and ten others fled into the woods, choosing freedom there to an island captivity. Sadly the rest left their fish weirs and bridge, their orchards and fields, their homes and meeting house; and, at





such short notice, for the day was verging toward evening, they left more than they could take. When the exiles had journeyed probably through Newton Upper Falls, and near Nonantum Hill, toward nine or ten at night, they reached the Pines. Here Eliot met his dusky friends on the river side, and spent some hours in prayer and religious exhortation. Other English friends present were much affected. Gookin writes: "Seeing how Christianly these poor souls carried it, being in fear they should be transported out of the country." At midnight came flood-tide, when the waiting boats standing down stream—not bridged as now—for there was a ferry from Boston to Charlestown, but no bridges, bore away the submissive natives, past a pine-clad swell, now Mt. Auburn, in sight of Cambridge, sweeping down seaward around each bend of the channel, till, where it greatly broadened, they might have seen Mr. Eliot's church crowning the hill in Roxbury; and by sunrise, or later, saw Shawmut's three-peaked summit—our Tremont thus gets its name—at the extremity of the peninsula, Boston on one side, Charlestown opposite, where, catching the swell of the ocean, they coasted down to their island residence, facing the rough Atlantic. Did it sadden their feelings that the stream which floated them on that mournful Saturday, to their unwelcome abode by the sea, was their own dashing, sparkling Quinobequin? Through that dreary winter they pined and suffered, especially the aged and feeble. Some sickened and died. Some of their able-bodied men were used in service with the troops as guides and scouts.

In December James Quannopowit and Job Kattenanit were sent from Deer Island as spies to learn the enemy's spirit and movements; they took to the woods at Natick, Friday, Dec. 31st, and soon were among the hostile Nipmuck, to whom they told a story of English wrongs which was, alas! too true. Here they found the Hassenemesit refugees. James' relation to the General Court, on his return is extant, and we follow his account. These Nipmucks sold beaver and wampum to the Mohawks in exchange for powder, which their neighbors got from the Dutch at Albany.

Some Indians mistrusted these two spies, but "John, with the one eye," knew James, and said, "I know thee, that thou art





a valient man, therefore abide at my wigwam, and I will protect thee." But Job stayed where his children were. They abode thus some days, and went forth to hunt deer. Early one morning James, having gotten about a pint of wokake, or parched meal, from a friend, with Job went hunting. Some Indians watched them all day, but at night they were unobserved. About 3 o'clock, before day, James said to Job, "now let us escape away if we can." But Job said, "I am not willing to go now, because my children are here. I will stay longer. If God please, He can preserve my life; if not, I am willing to die. I will use what policy I can to get away my children; if I live three weeks hence, I will come back to Natick, I shall, if I live, by that time get more intelligence of affairs." Then James said, "I must now go away, for I am not like to have a better opportunity, but I am sorry for you, lest they kill you for my sake." So they parted, and James came homeward, travelling night and day on snow shoes, weary, faint and spent with his eighteen miles journey, and reported to Major Gookin at Cambridge.

On the 9th of February, Job arrived, confirming the tidings that James brought, that Lancaster would be attacked, and naming beside, February 10th, as the day. Post riders started off that night for Marlboro, and Capt. Wadsworth reached the threatened town and saved it from complete destruction. Although Job had brought timely intelligence, the most part of the whites still doubted his sincerity. When he wished to meet at the day and place agreed upon, his children and friends, to bring them among the English, leave of absence was refused him. Afterwards, when troops went that way, at the commander's special desire, Kattenanit accompanied them. Arriving at the trysting place, the time had gone by, and his friends, fearing discovery by foes, had withdrawn. Some English troops found them and stripped them of what little goods they had, among other articles a sacramental cup which Mr. Eliot had given their minister. But Major Savage treated them well, sending them on their way to Boston. At Marlboro they were alarmed, and took to the forest. Finally Job and his children were re-united, and his history has a touch of romance, for he



married a praying woman, who, during their stay in the forest, had been a mother to his little ones.

The enemy near Wachuset had burned Lancaster and Medfield. Affairs looked gloomy in the spring of 1676. Necessity at last drove the English not only to use the Christian natives as messengers and spies, but to enlist them for the battle. A company of forty with white officers, was armed, and on tidings of the Sudbury defeat, despatched from Charlestown. Arriving near the scene of defeat, they crossed the river, and found Capt. Wadsworth, and his wounded, on the field of yesterday's fight. The services rendered here by the new recruits, turned somewhat the jealousy before felt.

As, on a large scale, quite recently, the enlistment of a wronged race brought victory to the Union arms, so when our fathers treated the Christian natives honorably, Providence favored their enterprises.

Gookin observes that, "after our Indians first went forth; the enemy went down the wind amain."

This war, so costly to all parties, drew towards its ending; Brookfield, Lancaster, Marlboro and Medfield, had been burned, the surprises, at Deerfield, Northfield, Hatfield and Sudbury had carried a life-long sorrow to many widows and children. The friendly Indians had been exiled, losing much property. King Philip, too, might have rued the storm he had raised. His allies—the other tribes—fell off from him; he lost many of his braves, and, at last, uncle, sister, wife and son, were killed or taken. But he would not hear of peace, though but a faithful few remained. On Saturday, Aug. 12th, 1676, through information given by an Indian, he was, about daylight, surrounded in a swamp. Surprised, he started in flight, came upon our English soldiers, and a friendly Indian. The white man's gun missed fire, but the red man's bullet pierced his breast. At the hand of his own race fell the mighty warrior.

The last exploit reads quite picturesquely. Annawon with fifty more escaped when Philip was slain. From Plymouth Capt. Church went forth to capture him, and had left the larger part of his force at Taunton. He caught two Indians in the woods just from Annawon's camp. They said their leader did





not stay twice in the same place and was very daring, but agreed to discover his present retreat. Through the day they piloted the Captain with only a single white companion, and half a dozen Indians; and at nightfall came to the place. It lay behind a great rock, in a thicket so that everyone who came to Annawon must descend a steep, narrow path. Creeping to the top of the rock, Church looked down on the unsuspecting warriors, saw where their guns were stacked, and the meat roasting on spits over the fires. While a squaw was pounding green corn in a mortar for supper, Church and his brave few, descended right in their guide's shadows, and were fairly among the Indians when discovered. Supposing there was a large company of whites, they surrendered, especially as their guns had been promptly seized by Capt. Church at the first. After supper Church told his men to stand guard two hours, and then they might sleep, and he would watch the rest of the night. But neither Annawon, or his captor inclined to sleep. The Indian at last arose and went out of sight. As Church began to fear some plot of escape he returned, and, in the moonlight, was seen to have his hands full. He knelt down to Church, and said in English, "Great Captain, you have killed Philip, and conquered his country. For I believe that I, and my company are the last that war against the English, so suppose the war is ended by your means, and therefore, these things belong to you." He then took out of his pack a beautifully wrought belt which belonged to Philip. It was nine inches broad embroidered with wampum of various colors, wrought into figures of birds, beasts and flowers. Another belt for the head with streamers on the back side. A third was a smaller one, with a star, which the mighty sachem wore upon his breast. All had a red edging. Also two glazed powder horns, and a red blanket. These were Philips' royal insignia, and Annawon thought himself happy in yielding them to so brave a man as Captain Church. The rest of the night Annawon gave an account of what great success he had, formerly, in the wars under Massasoit, Philip's father.

We blush to write the fate of this old brave. Though the war was over, to Capt. Church's great grief, at Plymouth they



beheaded Annawon. The place of his capture is known as Annawon's Rock, in Rehoboth.

To the Naticks at Deer Island, others from Punkapoag, and elsewhere had been added. If 200 were taken from Natick, there may have been 400 or 500 in all upon the island. Mr. Eliot and Major Gookin often visited them, but the aged and feeble suffered from the bleak exposure. In May, '76 the Government released them, and they encamped; Waban and his friends on Mr. Cliver's land in Cambridge, near the river. Gookin reports in Nov., '76, eight companies of Christian converts, and says: "The Naticke Indians are disposed in fower companies as follows, viz: one company with James Rumney Marsh, and his kindred live in Meadfield with the approbation and consent of the English; these are in number about twenty-five. Another company live near Natick adjoyning to the garrison house of Andrew Dewin and his sons (who desire their neighborhood) and are under their inspection; the number of these may be about fifty souls.

A third company of them, with Waban, live near the falls of Charles River, neare to the house of Joseph Miller, and not farr from Capt. Prentice's; the number of these may be about sixty souls.

A fourth company dwell at Nonantum Hill near Leift. Trobridge and John Coones, who permits them to build their wigwams upon his ground. The number of this company, including some yt live neare Mr. John Whites, of Muddy River; a family or two, near Mr. Sparhawk's and Daniel Champney's, and Mr. Thomas Cliver's, which are employed by said persons to cut wood, and spin, and make stone walls, being but a small distance from the hill of Nonantum where their meeting is to keep Sabbath. There may be about seventy-five souls."

As by the removal to the harbor, and other troubles, many of the Indians lost their Bibles, a new edition of Eliot's translation appeared in 1685.

Could the converts in Massachusetts have been trusted at the outset, and white troops joined with an Indian contingent, it has been thought the war would have sooner ended, and less







REV. OLIVER PEABODY





disastrously. But they were distrusted and removed from their homes, thus exposing the English frontier.

A different policy was followed by the Plymouth magistrates, and also on the larger islands. Martha's Vineyard was quite Christianized by 1675. Gov. Mayhew was advised to disarm the Indians, but, on consultation with their chiefs, resolved to trust them. So guns and ammunition were allowed them; nor did they abuse their privilege. When Philip's emissaries came asking their help, they were at once passed over to the authorities. In short, they became a wall of defence to the whites. Fields were cultivated in security and not a drop of blood on the Vineyard or Nantucket. Possibly had Natick been garrisoned instead of abandoned, Medfield and Sudbury, at least might have been saved their disasters.

(REV.) SAMUEL D. HOSMER, IN 1877.

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## REV. OLIVER PEABODY

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### THE FIRST WHITE MINISTER IN NATICK, AFTER JOHN ELIOT

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The Board of Commissioners for Propagating the Gospel in New England was anxious to revive the work that under the ministrations of Eliot had been productive of so much good. But it was difficult to secure a person fit to undertake the task. Eleven candidates had declined the mission. The reason was that the French were stirring up the Indians to commence hostilities against the English, and a war was imminent. The twelfth man, Oliver Peabody, of Boxford, accepted.

He was the son of William and Hannah (Hale) Peabody, and was born in Boxford, May 7, 1698. The house in which he was born stood a few yards from the present (1905) residence of Rev. Albert B. Peabody in the eastern part of the town. His father died when Oliver was less than two years old, he being



the youngest of eight children. His mother reared him righteously, and he grew up pure-minded and zealous to be a man of worth and to accomplish something. But his knowledge of the world was meagre; and in the forest around his early home, with the companionship of a true and devoted mother and excellent elder brothers and sisters, he grew into a thoughtful, earnest young man.

Oliver's uncle, John Peabody, was the first schoolmaster of the town, and the succeeding master lived in the neighborhood. From his mother and these teachers he must have received the instruction sufficient to enable him to enter Harvard college, from which he graduated in 1721, six years having elapsed, apparently, between his matriculation and graduation. He was the first college graduate of the Peabody family and the town of Boxford.

He accepted the invitation of the Board of Commissioners for Propagating the Gospel in New England to become a missionary among the aborigines, not knowing to how dangerous a place nor how far he would be sent. His field was the wilderness. He was ordained a missionary to the Indians, and was immediately sent to Natick to revive the work of Eliot, that had so deteriorated since his death. He preached at Natick for the first time, Aug. 6, 1721, when there were but two white families in the town.

After preaching there for eight years, in 1729 a church was gathered consisting of three Indians and five whites, and he was formally ordained its pastor. Twenty-two persons were added to the church the first year.

He not only preached the gospel, but led the Indians to abandon savage modes of living, to make improvements in husbandry, to turn from drunkenness to sobriety, to cultivate good manners, and to read and write as well as to speak and understand the English language. He lived to see many of the aboriginal families enjoying comfortable homes, cultivated fields and flourishing orchards. He ever sought their best good.

Though naturally of a slender and delicate constitution, he went on a mission to the Mohegan tribe of Indians, but the fatigues he endured so impaired his health that it was never fully





restored. He lived several years after, but at length fell into a decline.

During his ministry one hundred and ninety-one Indians and four hundred and twenty-two English were baptized. Thirty-five Indians and one hundred and thirty whites were admitted to his church. In his last sickness the Indians expressed great anxiety for his health and happiness, and tendered him every service within their power. After his death sweetest memories of him remained in their minds, and they mourned for him as for a father. He fell asleep in the faith of Christ on Sunday, February 2, 1752, at the age of fifty-three, immediately after repeating the words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me in that day." 11 Timothy iv:7-8.

A monument, erected to the memory of Mr. Peabody at South Natick, bears a Latin inscription, an English translation of which is as follows:

"Here are deposited the remains of the reverend Oliver Peabody, a man venerable for the faculties of his mind and for all needful learning. He delighted much in theological investigations. He discharged the pastoral office with great renown for thirty years;—ministering to the people of Natick, especially to the aborigines in the cause of sacred learning. He was a model in social life. In benevolence and universality, he was pre-eminent. In the firm expectation of a future retribution, he was called from his ministry on the 2d of February, A. D. 1752, aged 54 years."

Two printed sermons of Mr. Peabody are extant, one being an "Artillery Electric Sermon," and the other entitled "The Foundations, Effects and Distinguishing Properties of a Good and Bad Hope of Salvation," with motives to excite all to labor and pray, that they may obtain a well grounded hope and some directions how to obtain it. Considered in a sermon, the substance of which was delivered at the evening lecture at the New North church in Boston, on Tuesday, June 8, 1742.

Mr. Peabody married Hannah, daughter of Rev. Joseph Baxter of Medfield, a lady distinguished for her piety and good



sense. She married, after Mr. Peabody's death, Dea. John Eliot of Boston, Nov. 2, 1769. The children of Mr. and Mrs. Peabody were as follows: 1. Catherine, born 1723-4, died unmarried, in Boxford, Sept. 17, 1802. 2. Oliver, born Jan. 15, 1725-6, graduated at Harvard College in 1745; ordained pastor of the First church in Roxbury Nov. 7, 1750, and died unmarried, May 29, 1752, at the age of twenty-six; 3. William, born Feb. 20, 1727-8, died unmarried, Jan. 13, 1767. 4. Rebecca, born June 13, 1730, married Dr. William Deming of Needham, Dec. 20, 1759, and died Jan. 18, 1822, at the age of ninety-one. 5. Mercy, born July 24, 1732, died unmarried, Nov. 20, 1804. 6. Joseph, born Sept. 19, 1734, died unmarried at Newberry, N. C. 7. Hannah, born March 12, 1736, married Rev. Elizur Holyoke of Boxford, Nov. 13, 1760, and died Dec. 20, 1808, at the age of seventy-two. 8. Susanna, born Sept. 6, 1739, died March 20, 1740. 9. Elizabeth, born April 6, 1742, died April 24, 1742. 10. Thomas, born Dec. 27, 1743, died Jan. 15, 1744. 11. Sarah, born Sept. 23, 1745, married, first Joseph Eliot of Boston, and second, William Brown of Boston, and died April 5, 1808.

Several of the children lived in Boxford with their sister, Mrs. Holyoke, at the ancient Holyoke house, which was built in 1759, by Mr. Holyoke's father, a wealthy merchant of Boston, brother of Edward Holyoke, president of Harvard college. Here, Rev. Mr. Holyoke passed his happy pastorate of nearly half a century. This is one of the oldest and largest and the most interesting of the houses of Boxford. When Mr. French bought the estate, nearly forty years ago, the house was greatly out of repair, and Mrs. M. L. Emerson wrote of it shortly after that time as follows:

"Neath sheltering elms the ancient dwelling stands  
Where several highways socially clasp hands;  
It's general air speaks of the 'auld lang syne,  
And years have left their mark in many a line.

The moss-grown shingles, broken and decayed,  
The loosened clap-boards, where the winds have played,  
The shattered window-panes, the door-stone low,  
All tell the story of the long ago.





Within, what tales these mouldering walls could tell  
If they could break their silence, mighty spell,—  
Of childhood age, of happiness and tears,  
Of life and death through all these hundred years!

Old, sunken floors by many footsteps worn;  
Paper once gay, but mildewed now and torn;  
The embellished doorways and the pannelled hall,  
The generations of the past recall

Two antique portraits, older than we know,—  
Perchance were old a century ago,  
Hang in the upper hall; faint shadows they  
Of faces long since passed from earth away.”

One of the ancient portraits mentioned in the above lines, is that of an oil painting of Rev. Oliver Peabody, having been painted about 1730. The picture is about a yard square. It descended with the title of the house from Mrs. Holyoke to her daughter Hannah, who lived here and died unmarried in 1865. The portrait continued to hang in the upper hall, and when the estate passed to Mr. French, the painting was permitted to remain. There it hangs today, as it has hung for nearly a century and a half.

The painting is valuable, aside from being the portrait of Rev. Oliver Peabody. It is the picture of the earliest Peabody and the earliest Boxford person that exists today, and reveals in a pleasing manner the character, culture and attractions of the man. It also shows the style of dress of that period better and more completely than any old painting known to the writer.

[The picture at the beginning of this sketch is copied from the original old painting of Rev. Oliver Peabody, described above. The article itself is taken from “The Essex Antiquarian,” an illustrated quarterly magazine published in Salem for Essex county. We are allowed to copy it, through the courtesy of its business manager, George Francis Dow, to whom we are also indebted for other kind assistance.—Ed. Historical Collections.]



## FELCHVILLE

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### ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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[The name Felchville was not given to that portion of the town of Natick until the advent of the Felch family, in the early part of the eighteenth century. The town had in May, 1805, been laid out into five school districts; and District Number Four included all the land comprising Walnut Hill, going east as far as Lake Crossing and north to Cochituate line.

"The Shoe and Leather Reporter" published in Oct., 1860 contained an article on "Shoe Towns of Massachusetts," in which it is stated that, "when there was but one house in that part of Natick, Asa Felch began as a maker of custom shoes in 1819, and persevered, with varying success, until 1829, when he manufactured his first case of sale shoes or brogans." But Edwin C. Morse, editor of the Natick Citizen, wrote in that paper, in 1878, a series of articles relating to the "Early Days of the Shoe Industry in Natick," in which he states that in 1827 Asa Felch began the manufacture of sale shoes or brogans, in Natick, at the residence of the late Rev. Isaac Jennison, on the Worcester turnpike. In a year or two he transferred his business to the Dr. Badger place, West Part, where he and Benjamin Badger manufactured. He then moved to what is now called Felchville, where he continued the business, in connection with his brother Isaac. They did quite an extensive business, for 30 years—they and their sons.

In these early days, when Felchville was in its infancy, the postal conveniences were very primitive. The stage coaches, which travelled over the Boston and Worcester turnpike, carried





the mail which, on arrival, was placed in a butter box on a shelf, in the Father Jennison house. Each person who expected any mail, went to the butter box and helped himself if he found any mail matter directed to him, leaving the remainder for other persons to take out, in the same way.

From an entry in the diary of the late Austin Bacon, we learn that the Felchville School district was set off from district number four, and established as district number seven, at a town meeting held April 30, 1849.

The following facts relating to this part of Natick were culled from an article, written in 1882, by a former resident of that locality.—Ed. Historical Collections.]

Referring to the genealogy of the Felch family, (written up under the direction of Miss Sarah G. Felch, in connection with Rev. E. C. Felch, of Cincinnati, Ohio,) we find Ebenezer Felch to be the fourth white settler of Natick, coming in 1723, the others being Thomas Sawin, Thomas Ellis, and Daniel Travis. His farm and house were located in the vicinity of Felch Bros. shoe shop. He was chosen the first Town Clerk, which office he held fifteen years. He was succeeded by his son John, who held the same position until the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, in which he participated. We find, by the records, that his successors—natives of Felchville—have been as follows: Stephen Bacon, Samuel Fiske, Wm. Goodnow, William Farris and Samuel Morse. We also find that most of the early settlers of the town settled either here or at South Natick, and most of the public offices were filled by people from this district.

About the year 1810 the Boston and Worcester Turnpike Company, was chartered for the accommodation of towns and villages between these two points, and, also, to open a great thoroughfare to the West. The Company, having an eye to business, of course located their road through Felchville, as what is now Natick Centre was at that time not much but bog-meadow and cow pasture, and it had no post office. But in Felchville were the Haynes Tavern, Daniel Wights' store, a blacksmith's shop, Dr. Angier's office and quite a respectable number of farm houses, and farmers, such as Master Bacon, Squire Farris, Dan-



iel Wight, Abel Drury, Asa Felch, Samuel Fiske, Capt. Whitney, Josiah Childs, Levi Felch, Edward Hammond, Oliver Felch, and many others, most of whom were officers of the town. Haynes' Tavern was a great resort for sleighing and dancing parties. It was at this house where was held that Famous Ball in which Calvin Angier Esq., (son of the Dr.) officiated, and furnished the groundwork for that famous ditty, entitled, "The Great Lord Mayor."

Less than fifty years ago this was the great thoroughfare for the out going stage lines, and four, six and eight-horse baggage-wagons freighted for the West; while eastward were driven great droves of cattle, sheep, swine and horses, almost blockading the way; in short, Felchville was the Hub and the now Natick Centre an outside district.

It was in what is called the Sherman House, Felchville, that Henry Wilson spent his first night in Natick, and Gen. Lafayette took a glass of wine while the stage horses were being changed, when he visited this country after the Revolutionary war. But we are writing of the enterprises of the village. Soon after the opening of the turnpike, Asa Felch, Jr., then a young man, conceived the idea of making and selling in the Boston and New York markets, what is now called the Natick Brogan, and he had the courage to successfully put it in force, one of the workmen being the Hon. William Bent, now of the firm of W. & J. M. Bent & Sons. Soon the news of young Felch's enterprise was spread about, and Edward Walcott and his brothers, Jonathan and John, and Benjamin Badger, came to town, and established shops in the west part, as the accommodations in this village were exhausted. Workmen flocked in from all the New England states; and even the fishermen from Cape Cod, left their nets, and cast their lot in Felchville.

It was to engage in this industry, established by Asa Felch, and to profit by it, that brought to this town such men as Hon. Henry Wilson, the Walcotts, the Hayeses, the Pebbles, Woodmans, Ferrins, Hanchetts, Nathaniel Clark, Fairbanks, Amblers, Nutts, Blaneys, Parkers, and many others; and by the unprecedented unselfishness he manifested in imparting to these strangers a knowledge of the business, and, in many ways, ren-





dering assistance to those in need, he laid the foundation of many a man's fortune without hope of reward. Many returned to their native states, and prosecuted their business there, while others remained and helped build up this gigantic industry of ours. We will mention especially William Bent, founder of the firm of W. & J. M. Bent & Sons, one of the largest manufacturers in the state, and a person whose goods have a reputation second to none.

Most of Natick's men of a literary, judicial or scientific nature, for the last eighty years, except Calvin E. Stowe and Amos Perry of South Natick, were born in this part of the town. Among them were Rev. Daniel Wight, Judge J. W. Bacon (who represented this district two terms in the Senate,) Rev. Isaac Jennison, Jr., and Dr. Samuel Whitney, a noted physician and surgeon, both in this country and Europe; John, Joseph and Charles Angier—sons of Dr. Angier—all three graduating at Harvard. John and Charles became teachers, while Joseph entered the ministry. All seven of the above named persons attended school in the old brick school-house on Walnut Hill.

It was here that the nucleus of the Methodist church was formed. The town was filling up with a miscellaneous sort of people, and there was no church, dedicated to the Methodist creed, nearer than the one located in the corner of Weston. The Rev. Isaac Jennison, although he had a large farm to manage, had, by appointment, held the office of circuit preacher for quite a number of years, and knew by experience, (as he expressed himself) what persistent effort it took "to drive the devil out when he had a *firm* hold, being compelled, in many cases, to use a breaking-up plow to root up the tares, and prepare the field for the seed of the gospel." Knowing that there had been a legacy left for the support of the gospel in town, he proposed to the officers of the Orthodox society, that there should be a division, to which they demurred. To settle the case a committee was appointed to place the matter before the Legislature, which decided adversely to the Methodists. Not to be baffled, Father Jennison, with his indomitable perseverance, called together his brothers-in-law, including Isaac, Ira, Asa, Sabine and Levi Felch, John Jennings, Senior, and Moses Fisk, and declared that



he felt it to be his duty to build a church; that the devil was then busily sowing his seed in the town, and that the building should be commenced at once, and placed where it was most needed—Natick Centre, of course. In a very short space of time there was erected the old Methodist church, one of the most modern churches of the times, an ornament to Natick, and, in fact, the only modern-styled building in the town. Ira Felch was the architect and master-builder. The grounds were tastefully arranged. Father Jennison lived to see the church building enlarged and sold, and a still more modern one erected for the use of the church he had, by untiring efforts, founded—dying at the age of eighty-eight years, acknowledged by all—saint or sinner—an honest, faithful servant of the Lord.

Did space permit we might mention many citizens of note in the past and present, among whom is Capt. Willard Drury, who almost said, like Andrew Jackson, "By the Eternal I take the responsibility," when he secured to the town, in face of the strongest opposition, the munificent bequest of Mary Ann Morse to establish a Town Library, and, by prudent, skilful, financial management, has raised an everlasting monument to his fame.

Isaac Felch, who erected Felch's block, besides representing his native town in General Court, has held many other offices in the gift of his townsmen, with honor to himself and to Natick.

William Farris, Esq., representative to General Court, (several times) held many other offices, besides being our first Postmaster, which office he held twenty years.

Henry Coggin, Esq., was deputy postmaster until Squire Farris resigned in 1840.

Nature has made this district so attractive, that strangers, and our own citizens who have built residences elsewhere, have forsaken them for situations in this district on Walnut Hill. As evidence that people with unprejudiced minds regard this location with favor, we refer to the valuable acquisitions to this section the past year; prominent among them is the purchasing of the farm, and renovating of the buildings upon the Father Jennison place, by Dea. A. H. Wright of the firm of Pratt, Wright, & Co., of Brattleboro, Vermont. He wishing to crown a suc-





cessful business life, with an old age of ease, after spending months looking for a suitable location, found this, above all others, the one most desirable. Dea. Wright brings to us a family and connections whose social and moral status, are of the highest order; thus enabling the Jennison brothers to carry out their resolution (to their honor be it said) that "this venerable estate should not fall into vandal hands." Mr. Goddard, a friend of the Deacon, also from Brattleboro, has purchased land and erected a residence a little south of the Jennison place. Mr. Goddard is a man of comparative leisure, having gained a competence as Master Builder in a western state, and is a valuable acquisition to our town. As you look out from his sitting-room window, you can not only see the church spires of six different towns, but also Nobscot and Wachusett mountains, and "Monadnock's bold brow," as well.

Our railroad accommodations are unequaled. The B. & A. R. R. built us a branch road some years ago; and last year commenced running frequent trains between this place and Boston; yet beyond this, Geo. F. Keep runs, almost hourly, a line of coaches, carrying the mails, and upwards of a hundred passengers, each day to the shoe shops in the north part of the district.

"And while they slept, the enemy sowed tares." We were not asleep but the enemy sowed tares. The tract of land known as "Nebraska Plains," before the buildings were erected upon it, was purposed by the citizens to be purchased for the use of the two villages as a public park. The subject was brought before the town at their annual town meeting, and the case was presented in an able manner, by Major William Rudd, who had changed his residence in Portland for this place. But the article was passed over to the next meeting. In the meantime a speculator bought the land and sold it for house lots, thus depriving us of a valuable location for a park, and creating somewhat of an eyesore in that direction, which time only can efface.

ALONZO F. TRAVIS IN 1882.

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[It is not difficult to forecast the future of this "Original School District," which Mr. Travis has so fully described. Na-



ture has, here, certainly lavished all her charms. The land is admirably adapted to residential purposes, being high and dry, with a pleasing prospect. The air is pure, the neighborhood excellent, and the electric trams give easy access to the centre of the town, and to all the trains of steam cars leading from it, in all directions. A well-equipped and wisely conducted educational institution—the Walnut Hill school gives dignity to the locality; and pleasant walks and drives abound. Already the beautiful building sites are being taken up by prospectors, who are laying out the land into house lots. It will not be long before people from the cities, who tire of their crowded and congested surroundings, will seek the retirement which can be found here, where the scenery is varied and attractive, and all the conditions quiet and restful.

We have just learned from the post office department, in Washington, that the first postmaster in Natick was Martin Haynes. He was appointed Jan. 27, 1815. William Farris who has been generally considered the first postmaster was not appointed until Jan. 15, 1818.—Ed. Hist. Collections.]

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## NATICK PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

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### WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW CAME TO US, AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT

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[The following paper was given, recently, before the "Women's Civic League" of Natick, by George C. Fairbanks, editor of the "Natick Bulletin." The Historical Society of this town, appreciating its value as an accurate representation of the subjects on which it treats, have secured permission of the writer to print it for preservation and future reference. Ed. Historical Collections.]

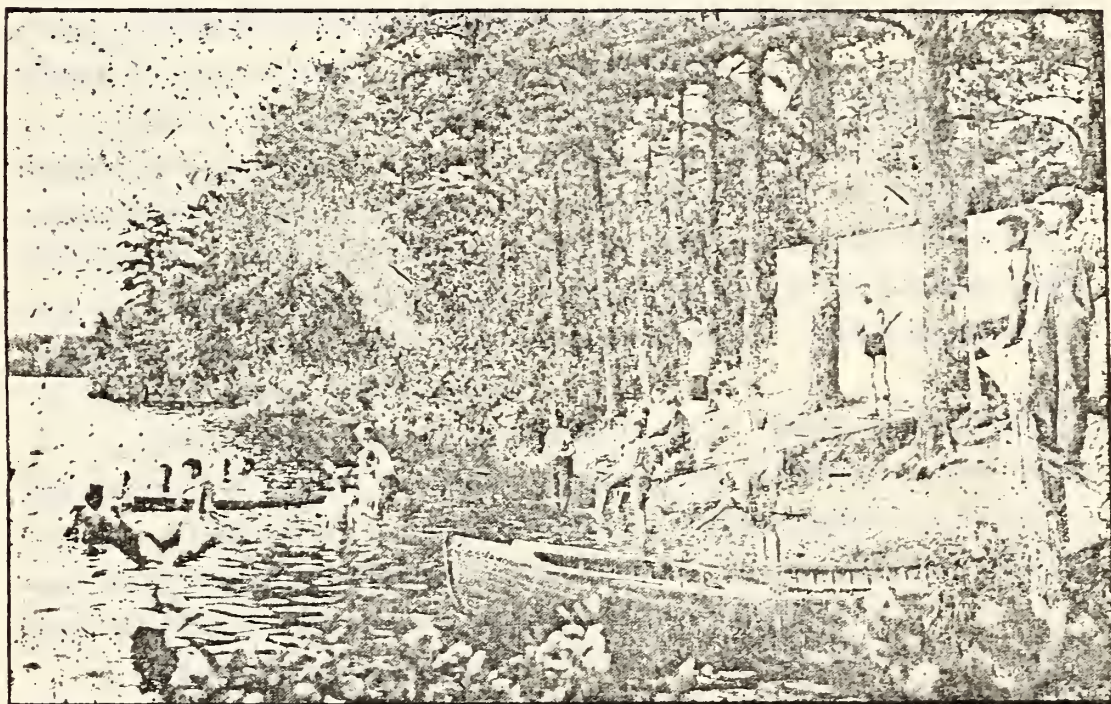
In an address before a Natick audience recently, a prominent speaker gave as the reason why thirty thousand young





men from New England had during the past few years gone to North West Canada to settle, while the opportunities here at home were far greater for success, was because our New England people have not yet realized the value of "exploiting" our own advantages as do the people in that newer country.

There are few communities upon which nature has more generously bestowed her favors than Natick, and none which possesses a greater wealth in natural attractions. Our hills and valleys, river and lakes are a most valuable asset, if we ourselves fully realized it, and a campaign of "exploitation" along these lines would seem necessary, if we are to secure the greatest benefits from our possessions.



At the Bathing Beaches, Town Park

Among our own people there is surprising ignorance shown as to our parks and lands set aside for public uses, a condition from which we need awakening, that we may not only realize their great value, but to better appreciate the wisdom and foresight of those to whom we are indebted for these great privileges.

It may therefore be well to consider how our parks and public lands have come to us, what has been done for their





improvement and what we should do for their future development.

We have eight different plots set aside for public uses, an aggregate of over one hundred acres, and in addition, Dug Pond, a splendid water park, of over fifty acres. The assessed valuation placed upon these properties is between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

## NATICK COMMON

Natick Common was the first acquisition; and its history is an interesting one. In the absence of other information we rely upon the town records as to the manner in which it came into the possession of the town, and find that this gift is closely allied with the building of a town house, over which the voters of Natick had a spirited controversy.

At the annual meeting in March, 1841, the town, with a population of only 1,300, conceived the idea that a town hall was necessary, and a committee was appointed to investigate the matter. At the April meeting this committee reported, favoring the erection of a two-story building at a cost of \$2,100, this amount to be taken from the "surplus revenue" which came from the United States government.

Two weeks later three attempts were made to reconsider this vote, but failed by close margins, of three, two and four votes. At another meeting on May 3, it was voted to erect a one story building, and again on May 24, it was deemed necessary to pass a new vote to legalize previous action.

These meetings were in the vestry of the Methodist meeting house, but adjourned to the Meeting House common where the voters stood in line to be counted. At this same meeting, the committee recommended the purchase of a lot of land of Elbridge Morse, near the cemetery, which was then on Main Street near So. Avenue, for \$250, but the meeting held a different opinion and adjourned for half an hour to view various lots, and upon reassembling voted to purchase a lot of Reuel Morse on Central street at the same price, \$250.

There is nothing in the records to show that in the selection of this lot the voters were influenced by the offer of a gift





of sixteen and one half rods of land adjoining, by John Kimball, whose residence stood in about the middle of the common as now laid out, but from the fact that Mr. Kimball carried on a general store and his conveyance to the town refers to the town house lot, it seems probable that he regarded the location of the Town house as of sufficient value to make this gift. In his deed to the town, he gives as a reason for this conveyance "that the open common, situated in front of his house is somewhat contracted in its limits, and a desire that said common shall be enlarged." If the "Common" spoken of in his deed was public, there is no record to show from whence it came, and it is safe to assume that this small plot, the gift of John Kimball, about 50 by 90 feet, was the first step toward the acquisition of the park or common now located in the centre of the town.

Early in the fifties the question of enlarging the common was agitated, but at the annual meeting of March 5, 1854, an article to purchase additional land was passed over. At the April meeting following, however, the selectmen were authorized to purchase land at an expense not exceeding \$8,000 provided one half be raised by contributions. It would seem that the task of raising \$4,000 was not an easy one, for at a town meeting May 5, 1855 an article appears in the warrant to see if the town will take further action, which was voted down. The failure to secure another appropriation from the town appears to have acted as a stimulant, for on May 30, John Kimball conveyed all the land which he owned in the square for \$6,800 and a like conveyance from William T. Hanchett and Walter Morse was made to the town for the consideration of \$1,200.

These conveyances with the Town House lot completed the Common as it is now laid out. The raising of \$4,000 was no easy task in those days but some of the old time shoe makers now living, say they contributed ten dollars, an indication that the movement was a popular one in which all the people were interested. The trees about the Common were set out by private individuals and much of the work was done without expense to the town. One who visits the Common today has pointed out to him the tree which Henry Wilson set out with his own hands



and which is located on the easterly side on Park street and is marked with a stone tablet.

### NATICK TOWN PARK

It was in 1873 by an act of the legislature the town of Natick took Dug Pond as a source of water supply. With it was conveyed to the town forty-six acres of land upon its borders for which the sum of about \$1,800 was paid by Natick.

This land was placed under the control of the Water Department and the then superintendent, being of a very practical turn of mind, saw in the beautiful oak grove east of the lake, nothing beyond its value for fuel, and under his orders a large part of the land was cleared.

Naturally those who had some conception of the beauty of this grove were quite indignant and this was manifested in the annual town meeting in 1880, when upon motion of the late Royal E. Farwell, all the land owned by the town and bordering on Dug Pond was set aside for a "Public Park" and a year later was placed in charge of Walter N. Mason, Alexander Blaney, D. H. L. Gleason, John B. Fairbanks and R. E. Farwell as a committee, who were given full powers "to lay out walks and drives and otherwise improve, provided that no expense be incurred to the town thereby," and they were empowered to call a public meeting and organize a Village Improvement Society.

These men were public spirited and realized the value of the property, which had thus been set aside for recreation purposes and frequent attempts were made to interest private individuals in its developement, but with little success.

Several attempts were also made to secure an appropriation from the town, but failed until 1885 when \$100 was voted for that purpose and this was continued for several years. The grounds were cleared, a few seats were erected and swings placed in the grove, but with so small an amount at their disposal, and there being a lack of interest, little could be accomplished, and finally the committee relinquished their efforts until a more propitious time.

In 1904 an addition was made to the Park by Wm. L. Coolidge, consisting of a tract of land of six acres, the highest





point from the easterly slope of Dug Pond, "the same to be called 'Timothy Coolidge Hill' in memory of his father who had purchased this lot when a young man with money earned in making shoes." The only condition of this gift was that the town should also set aside ten acres, which was a part of the Town Farm, to be used for an athletic field.

### HUNNEWELL PLAYGROUND

In 1902, by the will of H. Hollis Hunnewell, the town of Natick became the possessor of a tract of land, containing eleven acres, between the Charles river and the canal at South Natick, to be used as a playground and place of recreation for all citizens of the town. This plot was especially adapted for the purposes intended by the donor, and has since been laid out for athletic purposes, and a neat stone wall has been erected along the highway. In addition, Mrs. Robert G. Shaw, a daughter of Mr. Hunnewell, has provided a gymnasium for the use of the people of this section, and there are few communities which enjoy better opportunities for recreation and athletic sports.

### WASHBURN SQUARE

In 1904, a triangular plot of land containing one eighth of an acre, at the junction of South Main and Cottage streets, was presented to the town as a gift from the heirs of Dexter Washburn and Wm. L. Coolidge, and was named Washburn Square, in memory of the former. This lot has since been filled in and grassed down, and with sidewalks concreted and curbed makes a very attractive plot, and has proved an incentive for improving private grounds in that locality.

### COOLIDGE PLAYGROUND

In 1904, Wm. L. Coolidge also gave to the town about three acres of land off Chestnut street, the same to be used as a playground in memory of his sons Herman and Leander, to be called Coolidge Playground. In making the gift, he expressed the wish that preference in the use of these grounds be given to the pupils of the High school. Under the direction of the Park



Commissioners, these grounds have been put in good condition, and its use for athletic sports is increasing yearly.

### COOLIDGE PARK

In the same year, 1904, the town also accepted from Wm. L. Coolidge, the gift of 20 acres between School street and Lincoln road, known as "Coolidge Woods," to be devoted to Park purposes, and this, too, in memory of his sons Herman and Leander, to be called Coolidge Park. A suggestion embodied in Mr. Coolidge's offer of these gifts was that the town should accept the Park Act, placing all public ground in the control of Commissioners was complied with.

Mr. Coolidge in tendering this gift said that it might not be desirable to develop it at present, but it was his wish that when Natick should become thickly settled, to provide a place where the people could go for recreation without encroaching upon private property. The value of this plot is not appreciated today, but future generations will have cause to be grateful for "Coolidge Park," because it is easy of access to all, and commands a view for miles, and when properly developed will be a valuable acquisition to our Park system.

### OLD TOWN PARK

In 1906, the children of H. Hollis Hunnewell presented to the town a lot of land bordering on the Charles river near the centre of South Natick, in memory of their father. This gift was subject to no restrictions whatever, but the hope was expressed that it might be held for the use of the public. This gift was accepted by resolution, and the fact that no vote was passed, legally setting aside this plot for park uses, seems to have been overlooked, but will be corrected at the annual town meeting. Containing about one acre it has been cleared of a large number of unsightly buildings, walks laid out and ornamented with shrubs at the expense of the donors. A beauty spot itself, Old Town Park is rich in historical interest, for it was near this spot that the Apostle Eliot labored to christianize the Indians,





and nearby is the old meeting house, the Eliot oak, the monument erected to the memory of Eliot, and the grave of Takawambait, the first Indian minister. Here, too, was the site of the old mill famed in "Old Town Folks," and the stones that



Old Town Park, South Natick

ground the corn are preserved in the park as valuable relics of the past. For beauty and historical associations Old Town Park is the most valuable of our public reservations.

### LINCOLN PARK.

Lincoln Park is Natick's memorial to the martyr president, purchased by contributions of public spirited citizens and deeded to the town on February 12, 1909, on the occasion of the public observance of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, held under the auspices of Gen. Wadsworth Post 63, G. A. R.





With the acquirement of the Park the speaker was closely identified, and it is a source of much satisfaction to him that he was successful in accomplishing that which had so long been desired.

The triangular plot at the junction of Marion, Central and Union streets had for years been a nuisance to the neighborhood and an eyesore to the entire community. Its acquisition for Park purposes was advocated in the nineties. Village Improvement Societies and officials had striven to have the owners improve or permit others to do so. In the summer of 1908 the speaker offered \$500 for the plot which was refused. Six months later the owner himself sought to take advantage of this offer, and an option was taken. Plans were then being perfected for the observance of Lincoln Day, and from it came the inspiration that in no better way could Natick show its appreciation of Abraham Lincoln than by securing and setting aside the plot to his memory.

An appeal was made for funds in the BULLETIN of Jan. 29, 1909 for this purpose, and we were not mistaken in the generosity and patriotism of our people, for the necessary funds were subscribed within two weeks, and the plot presented to the town at the public exercises on February 12. The encouragement to raise additional funds for its improvement came from the ladies of Gen. Wadsworth Relief Corps, who generously voted \$25.00 to beautify Lincoln Park, which was the nucleus of the fund for the granite curbing and walks which have added so much to its attractiveness. The Park Commissioners have placed shrubs and seeded the plot and when the authorities shall have curbed and improved the sidewalks it will be a beautiful memorial to the great man whose memory it was sought to perpetuate.

### DUG POND

Dug Pond containing fifty acres and entirely within the Park limits, made a valuable addition with its bathing and boating privileges. In 1890, bath-houses at Dug Pond were advocated by the BULLETIN when a new water supply should be secured, but under the legislative act it reverted to the Metropolitan





Water Board and the same restrictions were placed upon it as on lake Cochituate and it was not available for public use. Upon his own petition a bill was introduced in the legislature of 1909 by the speaker which became a law April 9, giving to Natick the use of Dug Pond for bathing, boating and fishing and we know of no greater service which we could have rendered our native town in the legislature than in securing this great boon, which all the people can enjoy. The fact that over 1,000 persons availed themselves of the bathing privilege in a single day last summer indicates its popularity and in the years to come our water park will be even better appreciated and increase in the popular favor.

### HOW CAN WE DEVELOP?

In such a splendid system of Parks, Natick may well take pride for no town can excel and few equal in variety, beauty or attractiveness of its places for recreation. Their care and maintenance is now provided for by taxation, but with our present high tax rate little more can be expected for years to come. The time is ripe for development of the Town Park and here is the chance for our Improvement organizations to do good work. Let me quote from an article in the BULLETIN of 1898 which is as true today as then, showing the possibilities of this beautiful tract.

“Nature has done a great deal at the Park, which the hand of man cannot improve. To restrain nature in certain directions, is the thing now desirable. At the park there is a large and beautiful sheet of water, surrounded with a bold and serpentine shore, along whose lines it is possible and practicable to build a roadway full of those curves which are the delight of landscape gardeners and park engineers. Throughout the grounds are ample natural amphitheatres and small dells suited to great public gatherings and small social and family picnics. And there are enough trees along the route to supply sufficient shade to the roadway, and enough can be spared from the banks that line the lake to make the



view from shore to shore of the lake pleasant and beautiful to all who resort to the park for pleasure and for pleasant surprises.

Nearly in the center of the eastern portion of the park is an elliptical amphitheatre, whose eastern, northern and western slopes are capable of seating an audience of fifteen thousand persons, all within speaking and hearing distance of the central stand, which can be erected for speaking, stage or musical performances. This natural dell has no available superior in this section and in such easy access to the public. Lily lake can be made a perpetual feature by a waterpipe from the supply system and a drinking or spouting fountain are among the practical and possible things that can be done to aid the natural conditions and afford a beverage to the thirsty."

It is not to be expected that all of these improvements can be carried out at once but there are some things which are absolutely necessary if we are to make the Park a popular resort. A building for shelter in case of rain should be provided and provision should be made for good drinking water. Additional seats and swings should be erected. But above all, some means should be provided for making the Park more accessible to the people. Here is an opportunity for the construction of a boulevard or drive into the Park, later to be extended around its entire length; but the one thing above all others that is wanted to bring the Park near to the people is the construction of a foot bridge from Pond street into the Park property. To do this properly might require considerable outlay, but the project is feasible and could be carried out if taken in hand by a live organization or a committee of interested parties. The \$4,000 contributed for the purchase of the Common in 1854 represented \$1.00 for every person living in the town. If we of the present generation would be equally generous \$10,000 could be raised at once for Park development. All that is needed to accomplish this result, is workers, and if the public spirited people of Natick will only visit the Park and learn its real value the task of raising this fund would be comparatively easy. Here is the opportunity. Who will be first to take advantage of it?





## THE EDITOR'S COMMENT

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The Historical Society of this town present to the public the second volume of "Historical Collections" with a pardonable feeling of satisfaction. We have been successful in obtaining many articles of great interest and value. Natick is not only rich in historical associations but the town is also fortunate in possessing many residents who are well-fitted to write exceedingly interesting accounts of the many events which have transpired here in the past. These persons have responded most cordially to our invitation to write for us. We have also reprinted quite a number of papers which would otherwise be difficult to obtain. In many cases the articles have been taken from much worn copies of Natick papers which had been placed in our library, the Morse Institute, for reference. Many of these old papers are fairly dropping to pieces from constant use. As the years pass on the articles will grow more and more valuable.

The same persons, who assisted us last year, have continued their good offices and have given us cordial help in preparing the present volume. But, in this connection, we desire to mention particularly George C. Fairbanks, publisher of the Natick Bulletin. He has not only aided us by suggestions and advice, but he has, in every way, encouraged us in our undertaking. Encouragement in a work which involves so much research is always gratefully appreciated. The attention given by him to our work is reflected through the printing office, and every employe of the office, from the foreman down, seems personally interested in our historical work, and anxious to further it in every way possible.

Our photographer, A. Bendslev, also merits especial mention. Nothing adds more value to a volume than to have the articles illustrated with appropriate pictures, and Mr. Bendslev has spared no pains in furnishing us every illustration we desired.

Every family in Natick or elsewhere, which contains a paid-up member of the Historical and Natural History Society of this town will receive a copy of this pamphlet, free of charge of anything but postage (when sent by mail) at places to be designated when the announcement of its completion is made public.

For the Publication Committee

Q. AUGUSTA CHENEY, Secretary



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